SOLITUDE:

BY

ZIMMERMAN.

"Who loveth not the shade,
The sacred shade of solitude!"

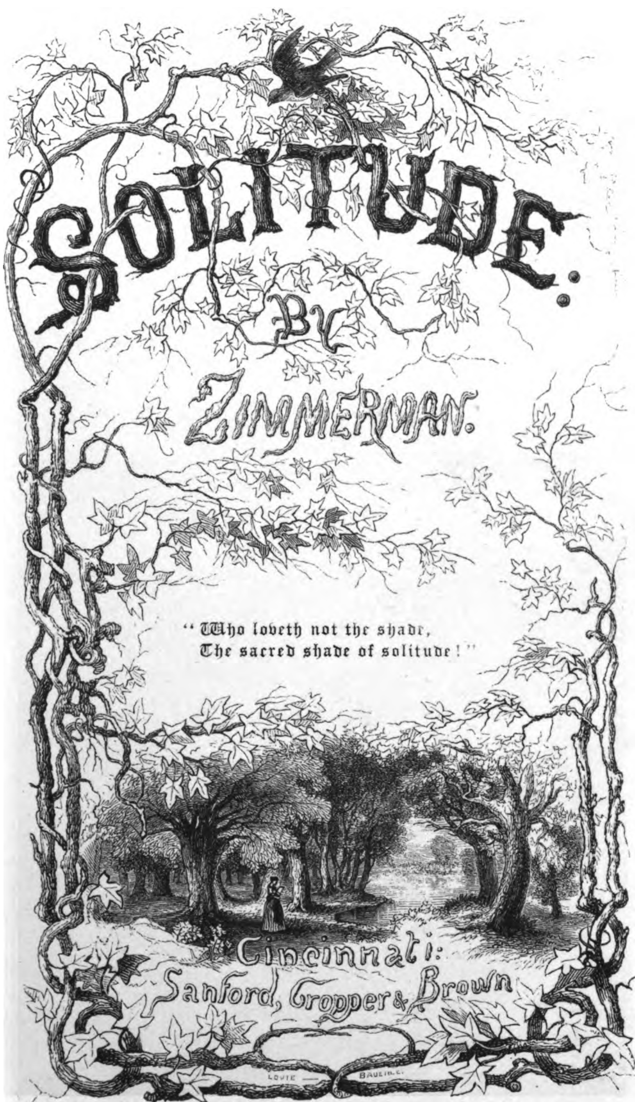
La solitude

Johann Georg Zimmermann

28

Mrs H. G. Kelley.
New York




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Cincinnati:
Sanford, Cropper & Brown

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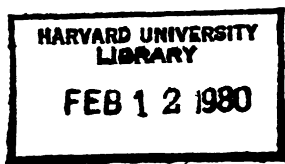
WITH THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

There is a time
For those whom wisdom and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks.

THOMPSON'S SEASONS.

CINCINNATI:
PUBLISHED BY CROPPER & BROWN,
(FRANKLIN BOOK STORE,)
NO. 140 WALNUT STREET,
1856.


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PREFACE.

WEAK and delicate minds may, perhaps, be alarmed by the title of this work. The word *solitude*, may possibly engender melancholy ideas; but they have only to read a few pages to be undeceived. The author is not one of those extravagant misanthropists who expect that men, formed by nature for the enjoyments of society and impelled continually toward it by a multitude of powerful and invincible propensities, should seek refuge in forests, and inhabit the dreary cave or lonely cell; he is a friend to the species, a rational philosopher, and the virtuous citizen, who, encouraged by the esteem of his sovereign, endeavors to enlighten the minds of his fellow creatures, upon a subject of infinite importance to them, the attainment of true felicity.

No writer appears more completely convinced than M. Zimmerman, that man is born for society, or feels its duties with more refined sensibility.

It is the nature of human society, and its correspondent duties, which he here undertakes to examine. The important character of father, husband, son, and citizen, impose on man a variety of obligations, which are always dear to virtuous minds, and establish between him, his country, his family, and his friends, relations too necessary and attractive to be disregarded.

"What wonder, therefore, since th' endearing ties
Of passion link the universal kind
Of man so close; what wonder if to search
This common nature through the various change

Of sex, of age, and fortune, and the frame
Of each peculiar, draw the busy mind
With unresisted charms? The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south,
Hold not a quarry to the curious flight,
Of knowledge half so tempting or so fair,
As man to man."

But it is not amidst tumultuous joys and noisy pleasures; in the chimeras of ambition, or the illusions of self-love; in the indulgence of feeling, or the gratification of desire, that men must expect to feel the charms of those mutual ties which link them so firmly to society. It is not in such enjoyments that men can feel the dignity of those duties, the performance of which nature has rendered productive of so many pleasures, or hope to taste that true felicity which results from an independent mind and a contented heart; a felicity seldom sought after, only because it is so little known, but which every individual may find within his own bosom. Who, alas! does not constantly experience the necessity of entering into that sacred asylum to search for consolation under the real or imaginary misfortunes of life, or to alleviate indeed more frequently the fatigue of its painful pleasures? Yes, all men, from the mercenary trader, who sinks under the anxiety of his daily task, to the proud statesman, intoxicated by the incense of popular applause, experience the desire of terminating their arduous career. Every bosom feels an anxiety for repose, and fondly wishes to steal from the vortex of a busy and perturbed life, to enjoy the tranquillity of solitude.

"Hackney'd in business, wearied at that oar
Which thousands, once chain'd fast to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb, runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pant for the refuge of a peaceful shade;

Where all his long anxieties forgot,
Amidst the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And having liv'd a trifler, die a man."

It is under the peaceful shades of solitude that the mind regenerates and requires fresh force; it is there alone that the happy can enjoy the fulness of felicity; or the miserable forget their wo; it is there that the bosom of sensibility experiences its most delicious emotions; it is there that creative genius frees itself from the thraldom of society, and surrenders itself to the impetuous rays of an ardent imagination. To this desired goal all our ideas and desires perpetually tend. "There is," says Dr. Johnson, "scarcely any writer, who has not celebrated the happiness of rural privacy, and delighted himself and his readers with the melody of birds, the whisper of groves, and the murmurs of rivulets; nor any man eminent for extent of capacity, or greatness of exploits, that has not left behind him some memorials of lonely wisdom and silent dignity."

The original work from which the following pages are selected, consists of four large volumes, which have acquired the universal approbation of the German empire, and obtained the suffrages of an empress celebrated for the superior brilliancy of her mind, and who has signified her approbation in the most flattering manner.

On the 26th of January, 1785, a courier dispatched by the Russian envoy at Hamburg, presented M. Zimmerman with a small casket, in the name of her majesty the empress of Russia. The casket contained a ring set round with diamonds of an extraordinary size and luster; and a gold medal bearing on one side the portrait

of the empress, and on the other the date of the happy reformation of the Russian empire. This present the empress accompanied with a letter, written with her own hand, containing these remarkable words:—"To M. Zimmerman, counsellor of state, and physician to his Britannic majesty, to thank him for the excellent precepts he has given to mankind in his treatise upon solitude."

LIFE OF ZIMMERMAN.

John George Zimmerman was born on the 8th day of December, 1728, at Brugg, a small town in the canton of Berne.

His father, John Zimmerman, was eminently distinguished as an able and eloquent member of the provincial council. His mother, who was equally respected and beloved for her good sense, easy manners, and modest virtues, was the daughter of the celebrated Pache, whose extraordinary learning and great abilities had contributed to advance him to a seat in the parliament of Paris.

The father of Zimmerman undertook the arduous task of superintending his education, and, by the assistance of able preceptors, instructed him in the rudiments of all the useful and ornamental sciences, until he had attained the age of fourteen years, when he sent him to the university of Berne, where, under Kirchberger, the historian and professor of rhetoric, and Altman, the celebrated Greek professor, he studied, for three years, philology and the belles lettres, with unremitting assiduity and attention.

Having passed nearly five years at the university, he began to think of applying the stores of information he had acquired to the purposes of active life; and after mentioning the subject cursorily to a few relations, he immediately resolved to follow the practice of physic. The extraordinary fame of Haller, who had recently been promoted by king George II. to a professorship in the University of Gottingen, resounded at this time throughout Europe; and Zimmerman determined to prosecute his studies in physic under the auspices of this great and celebrated master. He was admitted into the university on the 12th of September, 1747, and obtained his degree on the 14th of August, 1751. To relax his mind from severer studies he cultivated a complete knowledge of the English

language, and became so great a proficient in the polite and elegant literature of this country, that the British poets, particularly Shakspeare, Pope, and Thomson, were as familiar to him as his favorite authors, Homer and Virgil. Every moment, in short, of the four years he passed at Gottingen, was employed in the improvement of his mind; and so early as the year 1751, he produced a work in which he discovered the dawnings of that extraordinary genius which afterwards spread abroad with so much effulgence.*

During the early part of his residence at Berne, he published many excellent essays on various subjects in the Helvetic Journal; particularly a work on the talents and erudition of Haller. This grateful tribute to the just merits of his friend and benefactor, he afterwards enlarged into a complete history of his life and writings, as a scholar, a physician, and a man.

The health of Haller, which had suffered greatly by the severity of study, seemed to decline in proportion as his fame increased; and, obtaining permission to leave Gottingen, he repaired to Berne, to try, by the advice and assistance of Zimmerman, to restore, if possible, his decayed constitution. The benefits he experienced in a short time were so great, that he determined to relinquish his professorship, and to pass the remainder of his days in that city. In the family of Haller, lived a young lady, nearly related to him, whose maiden name was Mely, and whose husband, M. Stek, had been sometime dead. Zimmerman became deeply enamored of her charms; he offered her his hand in marriage; and they were united at the altar in the bands of mutual affection.

Soon after his union with this amiable woman, the situation of physician to the town of Brugg became vacant, which he was invited by the inhabitants to fill; and accordingly relinquished the pleasures and advantages he enjoyed at Berne, and returned to the place of his nativity, with a view to settle himself there for life. His time, however, was not so entirely engrossed by the duties of his profession, as to prevent him from indulging his mind in the pursuits of literature; and he read almost every work of reputed merit, whether of physic, moral philosophy, belles lettres, history,

* Dissertatio Physiologica de Irritabilitate quam publice defendet Joh. Georgius Zimmerman. Goett. 4to. 1751.

voyages, or even novels and romances, which the various presses of Europe from time to time produced. The novels and romances of England, in particular, gave him great delight.

But the amusements which Brugg afforded were extremely confined: and he fell into a state of nervous langour, or rather into a peevish dejection of spirits, neglecting society, and devoting himself almost entirely to a retired and sedentary life.

Under these circumstances, this excellent and able man passed fourteen years of an uneasy life; but neither his increasing practice, the success of his literary pursuits,* the exhortations of his friends, nor the endeavors of his family, were able to remove the melancholy and discontent that preyed continually on his mind. After some fruitless efforts to please him, he was in the beginning of April, 1768, appointed by the interest of Dr. Tissot, and Baron Hockstettin, to the post of principal physician to the king of Great Britain, at Hanover; and he departed from Brugg, to take possession of his new office, on the 4th of July, in the same year. Here he was plunged into the deepest affliction by the loss of his amiable wife, who after many years of lingering sufferance, and pious resignation, expired in his arms, on the 23d of June, 1770; an event which he has described in the following work, with eloquent tenderness and sensibility. His children too, were to him additional

* The following is a correct list of his writings, in the order in which they appear to have been published.

1. Dissertatio Inauguralis de Irritabilitate, 4to. Gottingen, 1751.
2. The Life of Professor Haller, 8 vo. Zurich, 1755.
3. Thoughts on the earthquake which was felt on the 9th of December, 1755, in Swisserland, 4to. 1756.
4. The Subversion of Lisbon, a Poem, 4to. 1756.
5. Meditations on Solitude, 8vo. 1756.
6. Essay on National Pride, 8vo. Zurich, 1764.
7. Treaties on Experience in Physic, 8vo. Zurich, 1764.
8. Treatise on the Dysentery, 8vo. Zurich, 1767.
9. Essay on Solitude, 4to. 1773.
10. Essay on Lavater's Physiognomy, Hanover, 1778.
11. Essays, consisting of agreeable and instructive Tales, 8vo. 1779.
12. Conversations with the King of Prussia.
13. Treatise on Frederick the Great, 1788.
14. Select views of the Life, Reign, and Character of Frederick the Great.
15. A variety of works published in the Helvetic Journal and in the Journals of the Physiological Society at Zurich.
16. A Work on Zoology.

causes of the keenest anguish and the deepest distress. His daughter had from her earliest infancy, discovered symptoms of consumption, so strong and inveterate as to defy all the powers of medicine, and which, in the summer of 1781, destroyed her life. The character of this amiable girl, and the feelings of her afflicted father on this melancholy event, his own pen has very affectingly described in the following work.

But the state and condition of his son was still more distressing to his feelings than even the death of his beloved daughter. This unhappy youth, who, while he was at the university, discovered the finest fancy and the soundest understanding, either from a malignant and inveterate species of scrofula, with which he had been periodically tortured from his earliest infancy, or from too close an application to study, fell very early in life into a state of bodily infirmity and mental languor, which terminated in the month of December, 1777, in a total derangement of his faculties; and he has now continued, in spite of every endeavor to restore him, a perfect idiot for more than twenty years.

The domestic comforts of Zimmerman were now almost entirely destroyed; till at length, he fixed upon the daughter of M. Berger, the king's physician at Lunenburgh, a niece to baron de Berger, as a person in every respect qualified to make him happy, and they were united to each other in marriage about the beginning of October, 1782. Zimmerman was nearly thirty years older than his bride; but genius and good sense are always young; and the similarity of their characters obliterated all recollection of disparity of age.

It was at this period that he composed his great and favorite work on solitude, thirty years after the publication of his first essay on the subject. It consists of four volumes in quarto; the two first of which were published in 1784; and the remaining volumes in 1786. "A work," says Tissot, "which will always be read with as much profit as pleasure, as it contains the most sublime conceptions, the greatest sagacity of observation, and extreme propriety of application, much ability in the choice of examples, and (what I cannot commend too highly, because I can say nothing that does him so much honor, nor give him any praise that would be more gratifying to his own heart) a constant anxiety for the interest of religion,

with the sacred and solemn truths of which his mind was most devoutly impressed."

The king of Prussia, while he was reviewing his troops in Silesia, in the autumn of the year 1785, caught a severe cold, which settled on his lungs, and in the course of nine months brought on symptoms of an approaching dropsy. Zimmerman, by two very flattering letters of the 6th and 16th of June, 1786, was solicited by his majesty to attend him, and he arrived at Potsdam on the 23d of the same month; but he immediately discovered that his royal patient had but little hopes of recovery; and, after trying the effect of such medicines as he thought most likely to afford relief, he returned to Hanover on the 11th of July following.* But it was not Frederick alone who discovered his abilities. When in the year 1788, the melancholy state of the king of England's health alarmed the affection of his subjects, and produced an anxiety throughout Europe for his recovery, the government of Hanover dispatched Zimmerman to Holland, that he might be nearer London, in case his presence there became necessary; and he continued at the Hague until all danger was over.

Zimmerman was the first who had the courage to unveil the dangerous principles of the new philosophers, and to exhibit to the eyes of the German princes the risk they ran in neglecting to oppose the progress of so formidable a league. He convinced many of them and particular the emperor Leopold II., that the views of these *illuminated* conspirators were the destruction of Christianity, and the subversion of all regular government. These exertions, while they contributed to lessen the danger which threatened his adopted country, greatly impaired his health."

In the month of November, 1794, he was obliged to have recourse to strong opiates to procure even a short repose; his appetite decreased; his strength failed him; and he became so weak and emaciated, that, in January 1795, he was induced to visit a few particular patients in his carriage, it was painful to him to write a prescription, and he frequently fainted while ascending to the room. These symptoms were followed by a dizziness in his head, which

* The king only survived the departure of his physician five weeks; he died on the 11th of August 1786.

obliged him to relinquish all business. At length the axis of his brain gave way, and reduced him to such a state of mental imbecility, that he was haunted continually by an idea that the enemy was plundering his house, and that he and his family were reduced to a state of misery and want. His medical friends, particularly Dr. Wichman, by whom he was constantly attended, contributed their advice and assistance to restore him to health; and conceiving that a journey and change of air were the best remedies that could be applied, they sent him to Eutin, in the duchy of Holstein, where he continued three months, and about the month of June, 1795, returned to Hanover greatly recovered. But the fatal dart had infixed itself too deeply to be entirely removed; he soon afterwards relapsed into his former imbecility, and barely existed in lingering sufferance for many months, refusing to take any medicines, and scarcely any food; continually harassed and distressed by the cruel illusion of poverty, which again haunted his imagination. At certain intervals his mind seemed to recover only for the purpose of rendering him sensible of his approaching dissolution; for he frequently said to his physicians, "My death I perceive will be slow and painful;" and, about fourteen hours before he died, he exclaimed, "Leave me to myself; I am dying." At length his emaciated body and exhausted mind sunk beneath the burden of mortality, and he expired without a groan, on the 7th of October, 1795, aged 66 years and 10 months.

SOLITUDE.

BY JOHN G. ZIMMERMAN.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

SOLITUDE is that intellectual state in which the mind voluntarily surrenders itself to its own reflections. The philosopher, therefore, who withdraws his attention from every external object to the contemplation of his own ideas, is not less solitary than he who abandons society, and resigns himself entirely to the calm enjoyments of lonely life.

The word "solitude" does not necessarily import a total retreat from the world and its concerns; the dome of domestic society, a rural village, or the library of a learned friend, may respectively become the seat of solitude, as well as the silent shade of some sequestered spot far removed from all connexion with mankind.

A person may be frequently solitary without being alone. The haughty baron, proud of his illustrious descent, is solitary unless he is surrounded by his equals; a profound reasoner is solitary at the tables of the witty and the gay. The mind may be as abstracted amidst a numerous assembly; as much withdrawn from every surrounding object; as retired and concentrated in itself; as solitary, in short, as a monk in his cloister, or a hermit in his cave. Solitude, indeed, may exist amidst the tumultuous intercourse of an agitated city as well as in

the peaceful shades of rural retirement; at London and at Paris, as well as on the plains of Thebes and the deserts of Nitria.

The mind, when withdrawn from external objects, adopts, freely and extensively, the dictates of its own ideas, and implicitly follows the taste, the temperament, the inclination, and the genius, of its possessor. Sauntering through the cloisters of the Magdalen convent at Hidelsheim, I could not observe, without a smile, an aviary of canary birds, which had been bred in the cell of a female devotee. A gentleman of Brabant lived five-and-twenty years without ever going out of his house, entertaining himself during that long period with forming a magnificent cabinet of pictures and paintings. Even unfortunate captives, who are doomed to perpetual imprisonment, may soften the rigors of their fate, by resigning themselves, as far as their situation will permit, to the ruling passion of their souls. Michael Ducret, the Swiss philosopher, while he was confined in the Castle of Aarburg, in the canton of Berne, in Swisserland, measured the hight of the Alps; and while the mind of Baron Trenck, during his imprisonment at Magdebourg, was, with incessant anxiety, fabricating projects to effect his escape, General Walrave, the companion of his captivity, contentedly passed his time feeding chickens.

The human mind, in proportion as it is deprived of external resources, sedulously labors to find within itself the means of happiness, learns to rely with confidence on its own exertions, and gains with greater certainty the power of being happy.

A work, therefore, on the subject of solitude, appeared to me likely to facilitate man in his search after true felicity.

Unworthy, however, as the dissipation and pleasures of the world appear to me to be of the avidity with which they are pursued, I equally disapprove of that extravagant system which inculcates a total dereliction of society; which will be found,

when seriously examined, to be equally romantic and impracticable. To be able to live independent of all assistance, except from our own power, is, I acknowledge, a noble effort of the human mind; but it is equally great and dignified to learn the art of enjoying the comforts of society with happiness to ourselves, and with utility to others.

While, therefore, I exhort my readers to listen to the advantages of *occasional retirement*, I warn them against the dangerous excess into which some of the disciples of this philosophy have fallen; an excess equally repugnant to reason and religion. May I happily steer through all the dangers with which my subject is surrounded; sacrifice nothing to prejudice; offer no violation to truth; and gain the approbation of the judicious and reflecting! If affliction shall feel one ray of comfort, or melancholy, released from a portion of its horrors, raise its downcast head; if I shall convince the lover of rural life, that all the finer springs of pleasure dry up and decay in the intense joys of crowded cities, and that the warmest emotions of the heart become there cold and torpid; if I shall evince the superior pleasures of the country; how many resources rural life affords against the languors of indolence; what purity of sentiment, what peaceful repose, what exalted happiness, is inspired by verdant meads, and the view of lively flocks quitting their rich pastures, to seek with the declining sun, their evening folds; how highly the romantic scenery of a wild and striking country, interspersed with cottages, the habitations of a happy, free, contented race of men, elevates the soul; how far more interesting to the heart are the joyful occupations of rural industry, than the dull and tasteless entertainments of a dissipated city; how much more easily, in short, the most excruciating sorrows are pleasingly subdued on the fragrant border of a peaceful stream, than in the midst of those treacherous delights which occupy the courts of kings—all my wishes will be accomplished, and my happiness complete.

Retirement from the world may prove peculiarly beneficial at two periods of life; in youth, to acquire the rudiments of useful information, to lay the foundation of the character intended to be pursued, and to obtain that train of thought which is to guide us through life; in age, to cast a retrospective view on the course we have ran; to reflect on the events we have observed, the vicissitudes we have experienced; to enjoy the flowers we have gathered on the way, and to congratulate ourselves upon the tempests we have survived. Lord Bolingbroke, in his "Idea of a Patriot King," says, that there is not a more profound nor a finer observation in all Lord Bacon's works, than the following: "We must choose betimes such virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and belong particularly to the stations we are in, and the duties of those stations. We must determine and fix our minds in such manner upon them, that the pursuit of them may become the business, and the attainment of them the end of our whole lives. Thus we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow, and imperfect operations of art. We must not proceed in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part, and sometimes on another; but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, or any other of her productions; *rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit:* she throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts."

It is, therefore, more especially to those youthful minds, who still remain susceptible of virtuous impressions, that I here pretend to point out the path which leads to true felicity. And if you acknowledge that I have enlightened your mind, corrected your manners, and tranquilized your heart, I shall congratulate myself on the success of my design, and think my labors richly rewarded.

Believe me, all ye amiable youths, from whose minds the artifices and gayeties of the world have not yet obliterated the precepts of a virtuous education; who are yet uninfected with its inglorious vanities; who, still ignorant of the tricks and blandishments of seduction, have preserved the desire to perform some glorious action, and retained the power to accomplish it; who, in the midst of feasting, dancing and assemblies, feel an inclination to escape from their unsatisfactory delights; solitude will afford you a safe asylum. Let the voice of experience recommend you to cultivate a fondness for domestic pleasures, to incite and fortify your souls to noble deeds, to acquire that cool judgment and intrepid spirit which enables you to form correct estimates of the characters of mankind, and of the pleasures of society. But to accomplish this high end, you must turn your eyes from those trifling and insignificant examples which a degenerated race of men affords, and study the illustrious characters of the ancient Greeks, the Romans, and the modern English. In what nation will you find more celebrated instances of human greatness? What people possess more valor, courage, firmness and knowledge; where do the arts and sciences shine with greater splendor, or with more useful effect? But do not deceive yourselves by a belief that you will acquire the character of an Englishman by wearing a cropped head of hair; no, you must pluck up the roots of vice from your mind, destroy the seeds of weakness in your bosoms, and imitate the great examples of heroic virtue which that nation so frequently affords. It is an ardent love of liberty, undaunted courage, deep penetration, elevated sentiment, and well-cultivated understanding, that constitute the British character; and not their cropped heads, half-boots and round hats. It is virtue alone, and not dress or titles, that can ennoble or adorn the human character. Dress is an object too minute and trifling wholly to occupy a rational mind; and an

illustrious descent is only advantageous as it renders the real merits of its immediate possessor more conspicuous. Never, however, lose sight of this important truth, that *no one can be truly great until he has gained a knowledge of himself*—a knowledge which can only be acquired by *occasional retirement.*

Solitude, in its strict and literal acceptation, is equally unfriendly to the happiness and foreign to the nature of mankind. An inclination to exercise the faculty of speech, to interchange the sentiments of the mind, to indulge the affections of the heart, and to receive themselves, while they bestow upon others, a kind assistance and support, drives men, by an ever active and almost irresistible impulse, from solitude to society; and teaches them that the highest temporal felicity they are capable of enjoying, must be sought for in a suitable union of the sexes and in a friendly intercourse with their fellow creatures. The profoundest deductions of reason, the highest flights of fancy, the finest sensibilities of the heart, the happiest discoveries of science, and the most valuable productions of art, are feebly felt and imperfectly enjoyed in the cold and cheerless regions of solitude. It is not to the senseless rock, or to the passing gale, that we can satisfactorily communicate our pleasures and our pains. The heavy sighs which incessantly transpire from the vacant bosoms of the solitary hermit and the surly misanthropist, indicate the absence of those high delights which ever accompany congenial sentiment and mutual affection. The soul sinks under a situation in which there are no kindred bosoms to participate in its joys, and sympathise in its sorrows; and feels, strongly feels, that the beneficent Creator has so framed and molded the temper of our minds, that society is the earliest impulse and the most powerful inclination of our hearts.

Society, however, although it is thus pointed out to us, as

it were by the finger of the Almighty, as the means of reaching our highest possible state of earthly felicity, is so pregnant with dangers, that it depends entirely on ourselves whether the indulgence of this instinctive propensity shall be productive of happiness or misery.

The pleasures of society, like pleasures of every other kind, must, to be pure and permanent, be temperate and discreet. While passion animates and sensibility cherishes, reason must direct and virtue be the object of our course. Those who search for happiness in a vague, desultory and indiscriminate intercourse with the world; who imagine the palace of pleasure to be surrounded by the gay, unthinking and volatile part of the species; who conceive that the rays of all human delight beam from places of public festivity and resort—

'Who all their joys in mean profusion waste,
Without reflection, management or taste;
Careless of all that virtue gives to please;
For thought too active and too mad for ease;
Who give each appetite too loose a rein,
Push all enjoyment to the verge of pain;
Impetuous follow where the passions call,
And live in rapture, or not live at all—"

will, instead of lasting and satisfactory fruition, meet only with sorrowful disappointment. This mode of seeking society is not a rational indulgence of that natural passion which heaven, in its benevolence to man, has planted in the human heart; but merely a facetious desire, an habitual pruriency, produced by restless leisure, and encouraged by vanity and dissipation. Social happiness, true and essential social happiness, resides only in the bosom of love and in the arms of friendship, and can only be really enjoyed by congenial hearts and kindred minds, in the domestic bowers of privacy and retirement. Affectionate intercourse produces an inexhaustible fund of delight. It is the perennial sunshine of

the mind. With what extreme anxiety do we all endeavor to find an amiable being with whom we may form a tender tie and close attachment, who may inspire us with unfading bliss, and receive increase of happiness from our endearments and attention! How greatly do such connections increase the kind and benevolent dispositions of the heart! and how greatly do such dispositions, while they lead the mind to the enjoyment of domestic happiness, awaken all the virtues, and call forth the best and strongest energies of the soul! Deprived of the chaste and endearing sympathies of love and friendship, the species sink into gross sensuality or mute indifference, neglect the improvement of their faculties, and renounce all anxiety to please; but incited by these propensities, the sexes mutually exert their powers, cultivate their talents, call every intellectual energy into action; and, by endeavoring to promote each other's happiness, mutually secure their own.

Adverse circumstances, however, frequently prevent well-disposed characters, not only from making the election which their hearts would prompt, and their understandings approve, but force them into alliances which both reason and sensibility reject. It is from the disappointments of love or of ambition that the sexes are generally repelled from society to solitude. The affection, the tenderness, the sensibility of the heart, are but too often torn and outraged by the cruelty and malevolence of an unfeeling world, in which vice bears on its audacious front the mask of virtue, and betrays innocence into the snares of unsuspected guilt. The victims, however, whether of love or of ambition, who retire from society to recruit their depressed spirits and repair their disordered minds, cannot, without injustice, be stigmatized as misanthropists, or arraigned as anti-social characters. All relish for scenes of social happiness may be lost by an extreme and over-ardent passion for the enjoyments of them; but it is only those who seek

retirement from an aversion to the company of their fellow creatures, that can be said to have renounced, or be destitute of, the common sympathies of nature.

The present age, however, is not likely to produce many such unnatural characters, for the manners of the whole world, and particularly of Europe, were never perhaps, more disposed to accompany. The rage for public entertainments seems to have infected all the classes of society. The pleasures of private life seem to be held in universal detestation and contempt; opprobrious epithets defame the humble enjoyments of domestic love, and those whose hours are not consumed in unmeaning visits, or unsocial parties, are regarded as censors of the common conduct of the world, or as enemies to their fellow creatures; but although mankind appear so extremely social, they certainly were never less friendly and affectionate. Neither rank, nor sex, nor age, is free from this pernicious habit. Infants, before they can well lisp the rudiments of speech, are initiated into the idle ceremonies and parade of company; and can scarcely meet their parents or their playmates without being obliged to perform a punctilious salutation. Formal card parties, and petty treats, engross the time that should be devoted to healthful exercise and manly recreation. The manners of the metropolis are imitated with inferior splendor, but with greater absurdity, in the country; every village has its routs and its assemblies, in which the curled darlings of the place blaze forth in feathered lustre and awkward magnificence; and while the charming simplicity of one sex is destroyed by affectation, the honest virtues of the other by dissolute gallantry, and the passions of both inflamed by vicious and indecent mirth, the grave elders of the districts are trying their tempers and impoverishing their purses at sixpenny whist and cassino.

The spirit of dissipation has reached even the vagrant tribe. The Gypsies of Germany suspend their predatory excursions,

and on one previously-appointed evening in every week, assemble to enjoy their guilty spoils in the fumes of strong waters and tobacco. The place of rendezvous is generally the vicinity of a mill, the proprietor of which, by affording to these wandering tribes an undisturbed asylum, not only secures his property from their depredations, but, by the idle tales with which they contrive to amuse his ear, respecting the characters and conduct of his neighbors, furnishes himself with new subjects of conversation for his next evening's coterie.

Minds that derive all their pleasures from the levity and mirth of promiscuous company, are seldom able to contribute, in any high degree, to their own amusement. Characters like these search every place for entertainment, except their own bosoms and the bosoms of their surrounding families, where, by proper cultivation, real happiness, the happiness arising from love and friendship, is alone capable of being found.

The wearied pleasurist, sinking under the weight that preys upon his spirits, flies to scenes of public gayety or private splendor, in fond, but vain expectation, that they will dispel his discontent, and recreate his mind; but he finds, alas! that the fancied asylum affords him no rest. The ever-craving appetite for pastime grows by what it feeds on; and the worm, which devoured his delight amidst his sylvan scenery of solitude, still accompanies him to crowded halls of elegance and festivity. While he eagerly embraces every object that promises to supply the dreadful vacancy of his mind, he exhausts its remaining strength; enlarges the wound he is so anxiously endeavoring to heal; and by too eagerly grasping at the phantom pleasure, loses, perhaps forever, the substantial power of being happy.

Men whose minds are capable of higher enjoyments, always feel these perturbed sensations when, deluded into a fashionable party, they find nothing to excite curiosity, or interest their feelings; and where they are pestered by the frivolous impor-

tunities of those for whom they can not entertain either friendship or esteem. How, indeed, is it possible for a sensible mind to feel the slightest approbation, when a coxcomb, enamored of his own eloquence, and swoln with the pride of self-conceited merit, tires by his loquacious nonsense, all around him?

The great Leibnitz was observed by his servant frequently to take notes while he sat at church; and the domestic very rationally conceived that he was making observations on the subject of the sermon; but it is more consistent with the character of this philosopher, to conclude, that he was indulging the powers of his own capacious and excursive mind, when those of the preacher ceased to interest him. Thus it happens, that while the multitude are driven from solitude to society, by being tired of themselves, there are some, and those not a few, who seek refuge in rational retirement from the frivolous dissipation of company.

An indolent mind is as irksome to itself as it is intolerable to others; but an active mind feels inexhaustible resources in its own power. The first is forced to fly from itself for enjoyment; while the other calmly resigns itself to its own suggestions, and always meets with the happiness it has vainly sought for in its communion with the world.

To rouse the soul from that lethargy into which its powers are so apt to drop from the tediousness of life, it is necessary to apply a stimulus both to the head and to the heart. Something must be contrived to strike the senses, and interest the mind. But it is much more difficult to convey pleasure to others than to receive it ourselves; and while the many wait in anxious hope of being entertained, they find but few who are capable of entertaining. Disappointment increases the eagerness of desire; and the uneasy multitude rush to places of public resort, endeavoring, by noise and bustle, festive gratification, elegant decoration, rich dresses. and sprightly music, to awaken the dormant faculties

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and agitate the stagnant sensibilities of the soul. These scenes may be considered the machineries of pleasure, they produce a temporary effect without requiring much effort or co-operation to obtain it; while those higher delights of which retirement is capable, can not be truly enjoyed without a certain degree of intellectual exertion. There are, indeed, many minds so totally corrupted by the unceasing pursuits of these vain and empty pleasures, that they are utterly incapable of relishing intellectual delight; which, as it affords an enjoyment totally unconnected with, and independent of, common society, requires a disposition and capacity which common company can never bestow. Retirement, therefore, and its attendant enjoyments are of a nature too refined for the gross and vulgar capacities of the multitude, who are more disposed to gratify their intellectual indolence, by receiving a species of entertainment which does not require from them the exertion of thought, than to enjoy pleasures of a nobler kind, which can only be procured by a rational restraint of the passions and a proper exercise of the powers of the mind. Violent and tumultuous impressions can alone gratify such characters, whose pleasures, like those of the slothful Sybarites, only indicate the pain they undergo in striving to be happy.

Men, eager for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, seldom attain the object they pursue. Dissatisfied with the enjoyments of the moment, they long for absent delight, which seems to promise a more poignant gratification. Their joys are like those of Tantalus, always in view but never within reach. The activity of such characters lead to no beneficial end; they are perpetually in motion without making any progress; they spur on "the lazy foot of time," and then complain of the rapidity of its flight, only because they have made no good use of its presence; they "take no note of time but by its loss;" and year follows year only to increase

their uneasiness. If the bright beam of Aurora wake them from their perturbed repose, it is only to create new anxiety how they are to drag through the passing day. The change of season produces no change in their wearied dispositions; and every hour comes and goes with equal indifference and discontent.

The pleasures of society, however, although they are attended with such unhappy effects, and pernicious consequences to men of weak heads and corrupted hearts, who only follow them for the purpose of indulging the follies and gratifying the vices to which they have given birth, are yet capable of affording to the wise and the virtuous a high, rational, sublime and satisfactory enjoyment. The world is the only theater upon which great and noble actions can be performed, or the hights of moral and intellectual excellence usefully attained. The society of the wise and good, exclusive of the pleasing relaxation it affords from the anxieties of business and the cares of life, conveys valuable information to the mind and virtuous feelings to the breast. There experience imparts its wisdom in a manner equally engaging and impressive; the faculties are improved and knowledge increased. Youth and age reciprocally contribute to the happiness of each other. Such a society, while it adds firmness to the character, gives fashion to the manners; and opens immediately to the view the delightful models of wisdom and integrity. It is only in such society that man can rationally hope to exercise, with any prospect of success, the latent principle which continually prompts him to pursue the high felicity of which he feels his nature capable, and of which the Creator has permitted him to form a faint idea.

"In every human heart there lies reclin'd
Some atom pregnant with ethereal mind;

Some plastic power, some intellectual ray,
Some genial sunbeam from the source of day;
Something that warms and restless to aspire,
Wakes the young heart, and sets the soul on fire;
And bids us all our inborn powers employ
To catch the phantom of ideal joy."

Sorrow frequently drives its unhappy victims from solitude into the vortex of society as a means of relief; for solitude is terrible to those whose minds are torn with anguish for the loss of some dear friend, whom death has, perhaps, taken untimely from their arms; and who would willingly renounce all worldly joys, to hear one accent of that beloved voice, which used, in calm retirement, to fill his ear with harmony, and his heart with rapture.

Solitude also is terrible to those whose felicity is founded on popular applause; who have acquired a degree of fame by intrigue, and actions of counterfeited virtue; and who suffer the most excruciating anxiety to preserve their spurious fame. Conscious of the fraudulent means by which they acquire possession of it, and of the weak foundation on which it is built, it appears continually to totter, and always ready to overwhelm them in its ruins. Their attention is sedulously called to every quarter; and, in order to prop up the unsubstantial fabric, they bend with mean submission to the pride of power; flatter the vanity, and accommodate themselves to the vices of the great; censure the genius that provokes their jealousy; ridicule the virtue that shames the conduct of their patrons; submit to all the follies of the age; take advantage of its errors; cherish its prejudices; applaud its superstition, and defend its vices. The fashionable circles may, perhaps, welcome such characters as their best supporters and highest ornaments; but to them the calm and tranquil pleasures of retirement are dreary and disgusting.

To all those, indeed, whom vice has betrayed into guilt, and whose bosoms are stung by the adders of remorse, solitude is doubly terrible; and they fly from its shades to scenes of wordly pleasure, in the hope of being able to silence the keen reproaches of violated conscience in the tumults of society. Vain attempt!

Solitude, indeed, as well as religion, has been represented in such dismal, disagreeable colors, by those who were incapable of tasting its sweets, and enjoying its advantages, that many dismiss it totally from all their schemes of happiness, and fly to it only to alleviate the bitterness of some momentary passion, or temporary adversity, or to hide the blushes of approaching shame. But there advantages to be derived from solitude, even under such circumstances, by those who are otherwise incapable of enjoying them. Those who know the most delightful comforts, and satisfactory enjoyments, of which a well regulated solitude is productive, like those who are acquainted with the solid benefits to be derived from religion, will seek retirement, in the hours of prosperity and content, as the only means by which they can be enjoyed in true perfection. The tranquility of its shades will give richness to their joys; its uninterrupted quietude will enable them to expatiate on the fulness of their felicity; and they will turn their eyes with soft compassion on the miseries of the world, when compared with the blessings they enjoy.

Strongly, therefore, as the social principle operates in our breast; and necessary as it is, when properly regulated, to the improvement of our minds, the refinement of our manners, and the melioration of our hearts; yet some portion of our time ought to be devoted to rational retirement; and we must not conclude that those who occasionally abstain from the tumultuous pleasures and promiscuous enjoyments of the world, are morose characters or of peevish disposi-

tions; nor stigmatize those who appear to prefer the calm delights of solitude to the tumultuous pleasures of the world as unnatural and anti-social.

"Whoever thinks, must see that man was made
To face the storm, not languish in the shade:
Action's his sphere, and for that sphere design'd,
Eternal pleasures open on his mind.
For this fair hope leads on th' impassion'd soul
Through life's wild lab'rinths to her distant goal;
Paints in each dream, to fan the genial flame,
The pomp of riches and the pride of fame;
Or fondly gives reflection's cooler eye
In solitude, an image of a future sky."

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE UPON THE MIND.

The true value of liberty can only be conceived by minds that are free; slaves remain indolently contented in captivity. Men who have been long tossed upon the troubled ocean of life, and have learned by severe experience to entertain just notions of the world and its concerns, to examine every object with unclouded and impartial eyes, to walk erect in the strict and thorny paths of virtue, and to find their happiness in the reflections of an honest mind, alone are *free.*

The path of virtue, indeed, is devious, dark and dreary; but though it leads the traveler over hills of difficulty, it at length brings him into the delightful and extensive plains of permanent happiness and secure repose.

The love of solitude, when cultivated in the morn of life, elevates the mind to a noble independence; but to acquire the advantage which solitude is capable of affording, the mind must not be impelled to it by melancholy and discontent, but by a real distaste to the idle pleasures of the world, a rational contempt for the deceitful joys of life, and just apprehensions of being corrupted and seduced by its insinuating and destructive gayeties.

Many men have acquired and exercised in solitude that transcendant greatness of mind which defies events; and, like the majestic cedar, which braves the fury of the most violent tempest, have resisted, with heroic courage, the severest storms of fate.

Solitude, indeed, sometimes renders the mind in a slight degree arrogant and conceited; but these effects are easily re-

moved by a judicious intercourse with mankind. Misanthropy, contempt of folly, and pride of spirit, are, in noble minds, changed by the maturity of age into dignity of character; and that fear of the opinion of the world which awed the weakness and inexperience of youth, is succeeded by firmness, and a high disdain of those false notions by which it was dismayed —the observations once so dreadful lose all their stings; the mind views objects not as they are, but as they ought to be; and, feeling a contempt for vice, rises into a noble enthusiasm for virtue, gaining from the conflict a rational experience and a compassionate feeling which never decay.

The science of the heart, indeed, with which youth should be familiarized as early as possible, is too frequently neglected. It removes the asperities and polishes the rough surfaces of the mind. This science is founded on that noble philosophy which regulates the characters of men; and operating more by love than by rigid precept, corrects the cold dictates of reason by the warm feelings of the heart; opens to view the dangers to which they are exposed; animates the dormant faculties of the mind, and prompts them to the practice of all the virtues.

Dion was educated in all the turpitude and servility of courts, accustomed to a life of softness and effeminacy, and, what is still worse, tainted by ostentation, luxury, and every species of vicious pleasure; but no sooner did he listen to the divine Plato, and acquire thereby a taste for that sublime philosophy which inculcates the practice of virtue, than his whole soul became deeply enamored of its charms. The same love of virtue with which Plato inspired the mind of Dion, may be silently, and almost imperceptibly, infused by every tender mother into the mind of her child. Philosophy, from the lips of a wise and sensible woman, glides quietly, but with strong effect, into the mind, through the feelings of the heart. Who is not fond of walking, even through the most rough and difficult paths, when conducted by the hand of love? What species

of instruction can be more successful than soft lessons from a female tongue, dictated by a mind profound in understanding, and elevated in sentiment, where the heart feels all the affection that her precepts inspire? O! may every mother, so endowed, be blessed with a child that delights to listen in private to her edifying observations; who, with a book in his hand, loves to seek among the rocks some sequestered spot favorable to study; who when walking with his dogs and gun, frequently reclines under the friendly shade of some majestic tree, and contemplates the great and glorious characters which the pages of Plutarch present to his view, instead of toiling through the thickets of the surrounding woods hunting for game.

The wishes of a mother are accomplished when the silence and solitude of the forests seize and animate the mind of her loved child; when he begins to feel that he has seen sufficiently the pleasures of the world; when he begins to perceive that there are greater and more valued characters than noblemen or esquires, than ministers or kings; characters who enjoy a more elevated sense of pleasure than gaming tables and assemblies are capable of affording; who seek at every interval of leisure, the shades of solitude with rapturous delight; whose minds have been inspired with a love of literature and philosophy from their earliest infancy; whose bosoms have glowed with a love of science through every subsequent period of their lives; and who, amidst the greatest calamities, are capable of banishing, by a secret charm, the deepest melancholy and most profound dejection.

The advantages of solitude to a mind that feels a real disgust at the tiresome intercourses of society, are inconceivable. Freed from the world, the vail which obscured the intellect suddenly falls, the clouds which dimmed the light of reason disappear, the painful burden which oppressed the soul is alleviated; we no longer wrestle with surrounding perils; the apprehension of danger vanishes; the sense of misfortune be-

comes softened; the dispensations of Providence no longer excite the murmur of discontent; and we enjoy the delightful pleasures of a calm, serene and happy mind. Patience and resignation follow and reside with a contented heart; every corroding care flies away on the wings of gayety; and on every side agreeable and interesting scenes present themselves to our view; the brilliant sun sinking behind the lofty mountains, tinging their snow-crowned turrets with golden rays; the feathered choir hastening to seek within their mossy cells a soft, a silent, and secure repose; the shrill crowing of the amorous cock; the solemn and stately march of oxen returning from their daily toil, and the graceful paces of the generous steed. But, amidst the vicious pleasures of a great metropolis, where sense and truth are constantly despised, and integrity and conscience thrown aside as inconvenient and oppressive, the fairest forms of fancy are obscured, and the purest virtues of the heart corrupted.

But the first and most incontestable advantage of solitude is, that it accustoms the mind to think; the imagination becomes more vivid, and the memory more faithful, while the sense remains undisturbed, and no external object agitates the soul. Removed far from the tiresome tumults of public society, where a multitude of heterogeneous objects dance before our eyes and fill the mind with incoherent notions, we learn to fix our attention to a single subject, and to contemplate that alone. An author, whose works I could read with pleasure every hour of my life, says, "It is the power of attention which, in a great measure, distinguishes the wise and great from the vulgar and trifling herd of men. The latter are accustomed to think, or rather to dream, without knowing the subject of their thoughts. In their unconnected rovings they pursue no end; they follow no track. Every thing floats loose and disjointed on the surface of their minds, like leaves scattered and blown about on the face of the waters."

The habit of thinking with steadiness and attention can only be acquired by avoiding the distraction which a multiplicity of objects always create; by turning our observation from external things, and seeking a situation in which our daily occupations are not perpetually shifting their course, and changing their direction.

Idleness and inattention soon destroy all the advantages of retirement; for the most dangerous passions, when the mind is not properly employed, rise into fermentation, and produce a variety of eccentric ideas and irregular desires. It is necessary, also, to elevate our thoughts above the mean consideration of sensual objects; the unincumbered mind then recalls all that it has read; all that has pleased the eye or delighted the ear; and reflecting on every idea which either observation, experience, or discourse, has produced, gains new information by every reflection, and conveys the purest pleasures to the soul. The intellect contemplates all the former scenes of life; views by anticipation those that are yet to come, and blends all ideas of past and future in the actual enjoyment of the present moment. To keep, however, the mental powers in proper tone, it is necessary to direct our attention invariably toward some noble and interesting study.

It may, perhaps, excite a smile when I assert that solitude is the only school in which the characters of men can be properly developed; but it must be recollected that, although the materials of this study must be amassed in society, it is in solitude alone that we can apply them to their proper use. The world is the great scene of our observations; but to apply them with propriety to their respective objects is exclusively the work of solitude. It is admitted that a knowledge of the nature of man is necessary to our happiness; and, therefore, I can not conceive how it is possible to call those characters malignant and misanthropic, who, while they continue in the world, endeavor to discover even the

faults, foibles and imperfections of human kind. The pursuit of this species of knowledge, which can only be gained by observation, is surely laudable, and not deserving the obloquy that has been cast on it. Do I, in my medical character, feel any malignity or hatred to the species when I study the nature and explore the secret causes of those weaknesses and disorders which are incidental to the human frame? When I examine the subject with the closest inspection, and point out for the general benefit, I hope, of mankind, as well as for my own satisfaction, all the frail and imperfect parts in the anatomy of the human body?

But a difference is supposed to exist between the observations which we are permitted to make upon the anatomy of the human body, and those which we assume respecting the philosophy of the human mind. The physician, it is said, studies the maladies which are incidental to the human frame, to apply such remedies as particular occasion may require; but it is contended that the moralist has a different end in view. This distinction, however, is certainly without foundation. A sensible and feeling philosopher views both the moral and physical defects of his fellow-creatures with an equal degree of regret. Why do moralists shun mankind by retiring into solitude, if it be not to avoid the contagion of those vices which they perceive so prevalent in the world, and which are not observed by those who are in the habit of seeing them daily indulged without censure or restraint? The mind, without doubt, feels a considerable degree of pleasure in detecting the imperfections of human nature; and where that detection may prove beneficial to mankind, without doing an injury to any individual, to publish them to the world, to point out their qualities, to place them, by a luminous description, before the eyes of men, is, in my idea, a pleasure so far from being mischievous, that I rather think, and I trust I shall continue to think so even in the hour of

death, it is the only real mode of discovering the machinations of the devil and destroying the effects of his works. Solitude, therefore, as it tends to excite a disposition to think with effect, to direct the attention to proper objects, to strengthen observation, and to increase the natural sagacity of the mind, is the school in which a true knowledge of the human character is most likely to be acquired.

Bonnet, in an affecting passage of the preface to his celebrated work on the Nature of the Soul, relates the manner in which solitude rendered even his defect of sight advantageous to him. "Solitude," says he, "necessarily leads the mind to meditation. The circumstances in which I have hitherto lived, joined to the sorrows which have attended me for many years, and from which I am not yet released, induced me to seek in reflection those comforts which my unhappy condition rendered necessary; and my mind is now become my constant retreat—from the enjoyments it affords I derive pleasures which, like potent charms, dispel all my afflictions." At this period the virtuous Bonnet was almost blind. Another excellent character, of a different kind, who devotes his time to the education of youth, Pfeffel, at Colmar, supports himself under the affliction of total blindness in a manner equally noble and affecting, by a life less solitary indeed, but by the opportunities of frequent leisure which he employs in the study of philosophy, the recreations of poetry, and the exercises of humanity. There was formerly in Japan a college of blind persons, who, in all probability, were endued with quicker discernment than many members of more enlightened colleges. These sightless academicians devoted their time to the study of history, poetry and music. The most celebrated traits in the annals of their country became the subject of their muse; and the harmony of their verses could only be excelled by the melody of their music. In reflecting upon the idleness and dissipa-

tion in which a number of solitary persons pass their time, we contemplate the conduct of these blind Japanese with the highest pleasure. The *mind's eye* opened and afforded them ample compensation for the loss of the corporeal organ. Light, life and joy flowed into their minds through the surrounding darkness, and blessed them with high enjoyment of tranquil thought and innocent occupation.

Solitude teaches us to think, and thought becomes the principal spring of human actions; for the *actions* of men, it is truly said, are nothing more than their *thoughts* embodied, and brought into substantial existence. The mind, therefore, has only to examine with candor and impartiality the idea which it feels the greatest inclination to pursue, in order to penetrate and expound the mystery of the human character; and he who has not been accustomed to self-examination, will, upon such a scrutiny, frequently discover truths of extreme importance to his happiness, which the mists of worldly delusions had concealed totally from his view.

Liberty and leisure are all that an active mind requires in solitude. The moment such a character finds itself alone, all the energies of his soul put themselves into motion, and rise to a hight incomparably greater than they could have reached under the impulse of a mind clogged and oppressed by the encumbrances of society. Even plodding authors, who only endeavor to improve the thoughts of others, and aim not at originality for themselves, derive such advantages from solitude, as to render them contented with their humble labors; but to superior minds, how exquisite are the pleasures they feel when solitude inspires the idea, and facilitates the execution of works of virtue and public benefit! works which constantly irritate the passions of the foolish, and confound the guilty consciences of the wicked. The exuberance of a fine fertile imagination is chastened by the surrounding tranquility of solitude; all its diverging rays are concentrated to one certain point; and the

mind exalted to such powerful energy, that whenever it is inclined to strike, the blow becomes tremendous and irresistible. Conscious of the extent and force of his powers, a character thus collected can not be dismayed by legions of adversaries; and he waits, with judicious circumspection, to render sooner or later, complete justice to the enemies of virtue. The profligacy of the world, where vice usurps the seat of greatness, hypocrisy assumes the face of candor, and prejudice overpowers the voice of truth, must, indeed, sting his bosom with the keenest sensations of mortification and regret; but cast his philosophic eye over the disordered scene, he will separate what *ought to be indulged* from what *ought not to be endured;* and by a happy, well-timed stroke of satire from his pen, will destroy the bloom of vice, disappoint machinations of hypocrisy, and expose the fallacies on which prejudice is founded.

Truth unfolds her charms in solitude with superior splendor. A great and good man, Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, says, "The great and the worthy, the pious and the virtuous, have ever been addicted to *serious retirement*. It is the characteristic of little and frivolous minds to be wholly occupied with the vulgar objects of life. These fill up their desires, and supply all the entertainment which their coarse apprehensions can relish. But a more refined and enlarged mind leaves the world behind it, feels a call for higher pleasures, and seeks them in retreat. The man of public spirit has recourse to it in order to reform plans for general good; the man of genius, in order to dwell on his favorite themes; the philosopher, to pursue his discoveries; and the saint, to improve himself in grace."

Numa, the legislator of Rome, while he was only a private individual, retired on the death of Tatia, his beloved wife, into the deep forests of Aricia, and wandered in solitary musings through the thickest groves and most sequestered shades. Superstition imputed his lonely propensity, not to disappointment,

discontent or hatred to mankind, but to a higher cause—a wish silently to communicate with some protecting deity. A rumor was circulated that the goddess Egeria, captivated by his virtues, had united herself to him in the sacred bonds of love, and by enlightening his mind and storing it with superior wisdom, had led him to divine felicity. The Druids, also, who dwelt among the rocks, in the woods, and in the most solitary places, are supposed to have instructed the infant nobility of their respective nations in wisdom and in eloquence, in the phenomena of nature, in astronomy, in the precepts of religion, and the mysteries of eternity. The profound wisdom thus bestowed on the characters of the Druids, although it was, like the story of Numa, the mere effects of imagination, discovers with what enthusiasm every age and country have revered those venerable characters, who, in the silence of the groves and in the tranquility of solitude, have devoted their time and talents to the improvement of the human mind, and the reformation of the species.

Genius frequently brings forth its finest fruit in solitude, merely by the exértion of its own intrinsic powers, unaided by the patronage of the great, the adulation of the multitude, or the hope of mercenary reward. Flanders, amidst all the horrors of civil discord, produced painters as rich in fame as they were poor in circumstances. The celebrated Correggio had so seldom been rewarded during his life, that the paltry payment of ten pistoles of German coin, and which he was obliged to travel as far as Parma to receive, created in his mind a joy so excessive that it caused his death. The self-approbation of conscious merit was the only recompense these great artists received; they painted with the hope of immortal fame, and posterity has done them justice.

Profound meditation in solitude and silence frequently exalts the mind above its natural tone, fires the imagination, and produces the most refined and sublime conceptions. The soul

then tastes the purest and most refined delight, and almost loses the idea of existence in the intellectual pleasures it receives. The mind on every motion darts through space into eternity; and raised, in his free enjoyment of its powers by its own enthusiasm, strengthens itself in the habitude of contemplating the noblest subjects, and of adopting the most heroic pursuits. It was in a solitary retreat, amidst the shades of a lofty mountain near Byrmont, that the foundation of one of the most extraordinary achievements of the present age was laid. The king of Prussia, while on a visit to Spa, withdrew himself from the company and walked in silent solitude amongst the most sequestered groves of this beautiful mountain, then adorned in all the rude luxuriance of nature, and to this day distinguished by the appellation of "The Royal Mountain."* On this uninhabited spot, since become the seat of dissipation, the youthful monarch, it is said, first formed the plan of conquering Silesia.

Solitude teaches with the happiest effect the important value of *time*, of which the indolent, having no conception, can form no estimate. A man who is ardently bent on employment, who is anxious not to live entirely in vain, never observes the rapid movements of a stop-watch, the true image of transitory life, and most striking emblem of the flight of time, without alarm and apprehension. Social intercourse, when it tends to keep the mind and heart in a proper tone, when it contributes to enlarge the sphere of knowledge, or to banish corroding care, can not, indeed, be considered a sacrifice of time. But where social intercourse, even when attended with these happy effects, engages all our attention, turns the calmness of friendship into the violence of love, transforms hours into minutes, and drives away all ideas, except those which the object of our affection inspires, year after year will roll unimproved away. Time

* Kœnigsberg.

properly employed never appears tedious; on the contrary, to him who is engaged in usefully discharging the duties of his station, according to the best of his ability, it is light, and pleasantly transitory.

A certain young prince, by the assistance of a number of domestics, seldom employs above five or six minutes in dressing. Of his carriage it would be incorrect to say he *goes* in it; for it *flies*. His table is superb and hospitable, but the pleasures of it are short and frugal. Princes, indeed, seem disposed to do every thing with rapidity. This royal youth, who possesses extraordinary talents, and uncommon dignity of character, attends in his own person to every application, and affords satisfaction and delight in every interview. His domestic establishment engages his most scrupulous attention; and he employs seven hours every day without exception, throughout the year, in reading the best English, Italian, French, and German authors. It may therefore be truly said, that this prince is well acquainted with the value of time.

The hours which a man of the world throws idly away, are in solitude disposed of with profitable pleasure; and no pleasure can be more profitable than that which results from the judicious use of time. Men have many duties to perform; he, therefore, who wishes to discharge them honorably, will vigilantly seize the earliest opportunity, if he do not wish that any part of the passing moments should be torn like a useless page from the book of life. Useful employment stops the career of time, and prolongs our existence. To think and to work is to live. Our ideas never flow with more rapidity and abundance, or with greater gayety, than in those hours which useful labor steals from idleness and dissipation. To employ our time with economy, we should frequently reflect how many hours escape from us against our inclination. A celebrated English author says, "When we have deducted all that is absorbed in sleep, all that is inevitably approoriated to the demands of nature, or

irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom; all that is passed in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or is given up in the reciprocation of civility to the disposal of others; all that is torn from us by the violence of disease, or stolen imperceptibily away by lassitude and languor; we shall find that part of our duration very small of which we can truly call ourselves masters, or which we can spend wholly at our own choice. Many of our hours are lost in a rotation of petty cares, in a constant recurrence of the same employments; many of our provisions for ease or happiness are always exhausted by the present day, and a great part of our existence serves no other purpose than that of enabling us to enjoy the rest.

Time is never more mispent than while we declaim against the want of it; all our actions are then tinctured with peevishness. The yoke of life is certainly the least oppressive when we carry it with good humor; and in the shades of rural retirement, when we have once acquired a resolution to pass our hours with economy, sorrowful lamentations on the subject of time mispent, and business neglected, never torture the mind.

Solitude, indeed, may prove more dangerous than all the dissipation of the world, if the mind be not properly employed. Every man, from the monarch on the throne to the peasant in the cottage, should have a daily task, which he should feel it his duty to perform without delay. "*Carpe diem,*" says Horace; and this recommendation will extend with equal propriety to every hour of our lives.

The voluptuous of every description, the votaries of Bacchus and the sons of Anacreon, exhort us to drive away corroding care, to promote incessant gayety and to enjoy the fleeting hours as they pass; and these precepts when rightly understood, and properly applied, are founded in strong sense and sound reason; but they must not be understood or applied in the way these sensualists advise; they must not be consumed

in drinking and debauchery; but employed in steadily advancing toward the accomplishment of the task which our respective duties require us to perform. "If," says Petrarch, "you feel any inclination to serve God, in which consists the highest felicities of our nature; if you are disposed to elevate the mind by the study of letters, which, next to religion, procures us the truest pleasures; if by your sentiments and writings, you are anxious to leave behind you something that will memorize your name with posterity; stop the rapid progress of time and prolong the course of this uncertain life—fly, ah! fly, I beseech you, from the enjoyment of the *world*, and pass the few remaining days you have to live in....*Solitude*."

Solitude refines the taste, by affording the mind greater opportunities to cull and select the beauties of those objects which engage its attention. There it depends entirely on ourselves to make choice of those employments which afford the highest pleasure; to read those writings, and to encourage those reflections which tend most to purify the mind, and store it with the richest variety of images. The false notions which we so easily acquire in the world, by relying upon the sentiments of others, instead of consulting our own, are in solitude easily avoided. To be obliged constantly to say, "*I dare not think otherwise*," is insupportable. Why, alas! will not men strive to form opinions of their own, rather than submit to be guided by the arbitrary dictates of others? If a work please me, of what importance is it to me whether the *beau monde* approve of it or not?—What information do I receive from you, ye cold and miserable critics?—Does your approbation make me feel whatever is truly noble, great and good, with higher relish, or more refined delight?—How can I submit to the judgment of men who always examine hastily, and generally determine wrong?

Men of enlightened minds, who are capable of correctly distinguishing beauties from defects, whose bosoms feel the

highest pleasure from the works of genius, and the severest pain from dullness and depravity, while they admire with enthusiasm, condemn with judgment and deliberation, and, retiring from the vulgar herd, either alone or in the society of selected friends, resign themselves to the delights of a tranquil intercourse with the illustrious sages of antiquity, and with those writers who have distinguished and adorned succeeding times.

Solitude, by enlarging the sphere of its information, by awakening a more lively curiosity, by relieving fatigue, and and by promoting application, renders the mind more active, and multiplies the number of its ideas. A man who is well acquainted with all these advantages has said, that "by silent, solitary reflection we exercise and strengthen all the powers of the mind. The many obstacles which render it difficult to pursue our path disperse and retire, and we return to a busy social life with more cheerfulness and content. The sphere of our understanding becomes enlarged by reflection; we have learned to survey more objects, and to behold them intellectually together; we carry a clearer sight, a juster judgment and firmer principles with us into the world in which we are to live and act; and are then more able, even in the midst of all its distractions, to preserve our attention, to think with accuracy, to determine with judgment, in a degree proportioned to the preparations we have made in the hours of retirement." Alas! in the ordinary commerce of the world, the curiosity of a rational mind soon decays, whilst in solitude it hourly augments. The researches of a finite being necessarily proceed by slow degrees. The mind links one proposition to another, joins experience with observation, and from the discovery of one truth proceeds in search of others. The astronomers who first observed the course of the planets, little imagined how important their discoveries would prove to the future interests and happiness of

mankind. Attached by the spangled splendor of the firmament, and observing that the stars nightly changed their course, curiosity induced them to explore this phenomenon, and led them to pursue the road of science. It is thus that the soul, by silent activity, augments its powers; and a contemplative mind advances in knowledge in proportion as it investigates the various causes, the immediate effects, and the remote consequences of an established truth. Reason, indeed, by impeding the wings of the imagination, renders her flight less rapid, but it makes the object of attainment more sure. Drawn aside by the charms of fancy, the mind may construct new worlds, but they immediately burst, like airy bubbles formed of soap and water; while reason examines the materials of its projected fabric, and uses those only which are durable and good.

"The great art to learn much," says Locke, "is to undertake a little at a time." Dr. Johnson, the celebrated English writer, has very forcibly observed, that "all the performances of human art, at which we look with praise or wonder, are instances of the resistless force of perseverance; it is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. If a man was to compare the effect of a single stroke with the pick-ax, or of one impression of the spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed with a sense of their disproportion; yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties—and mountains are leveled, and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings. It is therefore of the utmost importance that those who have any intention of deviating from the beaten roads of life, and acquiring a reputation superior to names hourly swept away by time among the refuse of fame, should add to their reason and their spirit the power of persisting in their purposes; acquire the art of sapping what they can not

batter; and the habit of vanquishing obstinate resistance by obstinate attacks."

It is activity of mind that gives life to the most dreary desert, converts the solitary cell into a social world, gives immortal fame to genius, and produces master-pieces of ingenuity to the artist. The mind feels a pleasure in the exercise of its powers proportioned to the difficulties it meets with, and the obstacles it has to surmount. When Apelles was reproached for having painted so few pictures, and for the incessant anxiety with which he re-touched his works, he contented himself with this observation, *I paint for posterity*.

The inactivity of monastic solitude, the sterile tranquility of the cloister, are ill suited to those who, after a serious preparation in retirement, and an assiduous examination of their own powers, feel a capacity and inclination to perform great and good actions for the benefit of mankind. Princes cannot live the lives of monks; statesmen are no longer sought for in monasteries and convents; generals are no longer chosen from the members of the church. Petrarch, therefore, very pertinently observes, that "solitude must not be inactive, nor leisure uselessly employed. A character indolent, slothful, languid, and detached from the affairs of life, must infallibly become melancholy and miserable. From such a being no good can be expected; he cannot pursue any useful science, or possess the faculties of a great man."

The rich and luxurious may claim an exclusive right to those pleasures which are capable of being purchased by pelf, in which the mind has no enjoyment, and which only afford a temporary relief to languor by steeping the senses in forgetfulness; but in the precious pleasures of intellect, so easily accessible by all mankind, the great have no exclusive privileges; for such enjoyments are only to be procured by our own industry, by serious reflection, profound thought, and deep research; exertions which open

hidden qualities to the mind, and lead it to the knowledge of truth, and to the contemplation of our physical and moral nature.

A Swiss preacher has in a German pulpit said "The streams of mental pleasures, of which all men may equally partake, flow from one to the other; and that of which we have most frequently tasted, loses neither its flavor nor its virtues, but frequently acquires new charms, and conveys additional pleasure the oftener it is tasted. The subjects of these pleasures are as unbounded as the reign of truth, as extensive as the world, as unlimited as the divine perfections. Incorporeal pleasures, therefore, are much more durable than all others; they neither disappear with the light of the day, change with the external form of things, nor descend with our bodies to the tomb; but continue with us while we exist; accompany us under all the vicissitudes not only of our natural life, but of that which is to come; secure us in the darkness of the night, and compensate for all the miseries we are doomed to suffer."

Great and exalted minds, therefore, have always, even in the bustle of gayety, or amidst the more agitated career of high ambition, preserved a taste for intellectual pleasures. Engaged in affairs of the most important consequence, notwithstanding the variety of objects by which their attention was distracted, they were still faithful to the muses, and fondly devoted their minds to works of genius. They disregarded the false notion, that reading and knowledge are useless to great men; and frequently condescended without a blush, to become writers themselves.

Philip of Macedon, having invited Dionysius the younger to dine with him at Corinth, attempted to deride the father of his royal guest, because he had blended the characters of prince and poet, and had employed his leisure in writing odes and tragedies. "How could the king find leisure," asked

Philip, "to write those trifles?" "In those hours," answered Dionysius, "which you and I spend in drunkenness and debauchery."

Alexander, who was passionately fond of reading, and whilst the world resounded with his victories, whilst blood and carnage marked his progress, whilst he dragged captive monarchs at his chariot wheels, and marched with increasing ardor over smoking towns and desolated provinces in search of new objects of victory, felt during certain intervals the languors of unemployed time; and lamenting that Asia afforded no books to amuse his leisure, he wrote to Harpalus to send him the works of Philistus, the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, Æschylus, and the dithyrambics of Thalestes.

Brutus, the avenger of the violated liberties of Rome, while serving in the army under Pompey, employed among books all the moments he could spare from the duties of his station; and was even thus employed during the awful night which preceded the celebrated battle of Pharsalia, by which the fate of the empire was decided. Oppressed by the excessive heat of the day, and by the preparatory arrangement of the army, which was encamped in the middle of summer on a marshy plain, he sought relief from the bath, and retired to his tent, where, whilst others were locked in the arms of sleep or contemplating the event of the ensuing day, he employed himself until the morning dawned in drawing a plan from the History of Polybius.

Cicero, who was more sensible of mental pleasures than any other character, says, in his oration for the poet Archias, "Why should I be ashamed to acknowledge pleasures like these, since for so many years the enjoyment of them has never prevented me from relieving the wants of others, or deprived me of the courage to attack vice and defend virtue; Who can justly blame, who can censure me, if while others are pursuing the views of interest, gazing at festal shows and

idle ceremonies, exploring new pleasures, engaged in midnight revels, in the distraction of gaming, the madness of intemperance, neither reposing the body, nor recreating the mind, I spend the recollective hours in a pleasing review of my past life, in dedicating my time to learning and the muses?"

Pliny the elder, full of the same spirit, devoted every moment of his life to learning. A person read to him during his meals, and he never traveled without a book and a portable writing-desk by his side. He made extracts from every work he read; and scarcely conceiving himself alive while his faculties were absorbed in sleep, endeavored by his diligence to double the duration of his existence.

Pliny the younger read upon all occasions, whether riding, walking or sitting, whenever a moment's leisure afforded him the opportunity; but he made it an invariable rule to prefer the discharge of the duties of his station to those occupations which he followed only as amusement. It was this disposition which so strongly inclined him to solitude and retirement. "Shall I never," exclaimed he in moments of vexation, "break the fetters by which I am restrained? Are they indissoluble? Alas! I have no hope of being gratified; every day brings new torments. No sooner is one duty performed than another succeeds. The chains of business become every hour more weighty and extensive."

The mind of Petrarch was always gloomy and dejected, except when he was reading, writing, or resigned to the agreeable illusions of poetry, upon the banks of some inspiring stream, among the romantic rocks and mountains, or the flower-enamelled vallies of the Alps. To avoid the loss of time during his travels, he constantly wrote at every inn where he stopped for refreshment. One of his friends, the bishop of Cavaillon, being alarmed lest the intense application with which he studied at Vaucluse might totally ruin a

constitution already much impaired, requested of him one day the key of his library. Petrarch immediately gave it him without asking the reason of his request; when the good bishop instantly locking up his books and writing-desk, said, "Petrarch, I hereby interdict you from the use of pen, ink, and paper, for the space of ten days." The sentence was severe; but the offender suppressed his feelings, and submitted to his fate. The first day of his exile from his favorite pursuits was tedious, the second accompanied with incessant head-ache, and the third brought on symptoms of fever. The bishop observing his indisposition, kindly returned him the key, and restored him to his health.

The late earl of Chatham, on his entering into the world, was a cornet in a troop of horse dragoons. The regiment was quartered in a small village in England. The duties of his station were the first objects of his attention; but the moment these were discharged, he retired into solitude during the remainder of the day, and devoted his mind to the study of history. Subject from his infancy to an hereditary gout, he endeavored to eradicate it by regularity and abstinence; and perhaps it was the feeble state of his health which first led him into retirement; but, however that may be, it was certainly in retirement that he had laid the foundation of that glory which he afterward acquired. Characters of this description, it may be said, are no longer to be found; but in my opinion both the idea and assertion would be erroneous. Was the earl of Chatham inferior in greatness to a Roman? And will his son, who already, in the earliest stage of manhood, thunders forth his eloquence in the senate, like Demosthenes, and captivates like Pericles the hearts of all who hear him; who is now, even in the five-and-twentieth year of his age, dreaded abroad, and beloved at home, as the prime minister of the British empire; ever think, or act under any circumstances with less greatness, than his illus-

trious father? What men have been, *man* may always be. Europe now produces characters as great as ever adorned a throne or commanded a field. Wisdom and virtue may exist, by proper cultivation, as well in public as in private life; and become as perfect in a crowded palace as in a solitary cottage.

Solitude will ultimately render the mind superior to all the vicissitudes and miseries of life. The man whose bosom neither riches, nor luxury, nor grandeur can render happy, may, with a book in his hand, forget all his torments under the friendly shade of every tree, and experience pleasures as infinite as they are varied, as pure as they are lasting, as lively as they are unfading, and as compatible with every public duty as they are contributary to private happiness. The highest public duty, indeed, is that of employing our faculties for the benefit of mankind, and can nowhere be so advantageously discharged as in solitude. To acquire a true notion of men and things, and boldly announce our opinions to the world, is an indispensable obligation on every individual. The *press* is the channel through which writers diffuse the light of truth among *the people*, and display its radiance to the eyes of *the great.* Good writers inspire the mind with courage to think for itself; and the free communication of sentiments contributes to the improvement and perfection of human reason. It is this love of liberty that leads men into solitude, where they may throw off the chains by which they are fettered in the world. It is this disposition to be free, that makes the man who thinks in solitude boldly speak a language which, in the corrupted intercourse of society, he would not have dared openly to hazard. Courage is the companion of solitude. The man who does not fear to seek his comforts in the peaceful shade of retirement, looks with firmness on the pride and insolence of *the great*, and tears from the face of despotism the mask by which it is concealed.

His mind, enriched by knowledge, may defy the frowns of

fortune, and see unmoved the various vicissitudes of life. When Demetrius had captured the city of Megara, and the property of the inhabitants had been entirely pillaged by the soldiers, he recollected that Stilpo, a philosopher of great reputation, who sought only the retirement and tranquility of a studious life, was among the number. Having sent for him, Demetrius asked him if he had lost any thing during the pillage? "No," replied the philosopher, "*my property is safe, for it exists only in mind.*"

Solitude encourages the disclosure of those sentiments and feelings which the manners of the world compel us to conceal. The mind there unburthens itself with ease and freedom. The pen, indeed, is not always taken up because we are alone; but if we are inclined to write, we ought to be alone. To cultivate philosophically, or court the muse with effect, the mind must be free from all embarrassment. The incessant cries of children, or the frequent intrusion of servants with messages of ceremony and cards of compliment, distract attention. An author, whether walking in the open air, seated in his closet, reclined under the shade of a spreading tree, or stretched upon a sofa, must be free to follow all the impulses of his mind, and indulge every bent and turn of his genius. To compose with success, he must feel an irresistible inclination, and be able to indulge his sentiments and emotions without obstacle or restraint. There are, indeed, minds possessed of a divine inspiration, which is capable of subduing every difficulty, and bearing down all opposition; and an author should suspend his work until he feels this secret call within his bosom, and watch for those propitious moments when the mind pours forth its ideas with energy, and the heart feels the subject with increasing warmth; for

" * * * * Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius; Nature's hand

Must string his nerves and imp his eagle wings,
Impatient of the painful steep, to soar
High as the summit; there to breathe at large
Æthereal air, with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise. * * * * "

Petrarch felt this sacred impulse when he tore himself from Avignon, the most vicious and corrupted city of the age, to which the pope had recently transferred the papal chair; and although still young, noble, ardent, honored by his holiness, respected by princes, courted by cardinals, he voluntarily quitted the splendid tumults of this brilliant court, and retired to the celebrated solitude of Vaucluse, at the distance of six leagues from Avignon, with only one servant to attend him, and no other possession than an humble cottage and its surrounding garden. Charmed with the natural beauties of this rural retreat, he adorned it with an excellent library, and dwelt for many years, in wise tranquility and rational repose, employing his leisure in completing and polishing his works; and producing more original compositions during this period than at any other of his life. But, although he here devoted much time and attention to his writings, it was long before he could be persuaded to make them public. Virgil calls the leisure he enjoyed at Naples, ignoble and obscure; but it was during this leisure that he wrote the Georgics, the most perfect of all his works, and which evince, in almost every line, that he wrote for immortality.

The suffrage of posterity, indeed, is a noble expectation, which every excellent and great writer cherishes with enthusiasm. An inferior mind contents itself with a more humble recompense, and sometimes obtains its due reward. But writers both great and good must withdraw from the interruptions of society, and, seeking the silence of the groves and the shades, retire into their own minds; for every thing

they perform, all that they produce, is the effect of solitude. To accomplish a work capable of existing through future ages, or deserving the approbation of cotemporary sages, the love of solitude must entirely occupy their souls; for there the mind reviews and arranges, with the happiest effect, all the ideas and impressions it has gained in its observations in the world—it is there alone that the dart of satire can be truly sharpened against inveterate prejudices and infatuated opinions; it is there alone that the vices and follies of mankind present themselves accurately to the view of the moralist and excite his ardent endeavors to correct and reform them. The hope of immortality is certainly the highest with which a great writer can possibly flatter his mind; but he must possess the comprehensive genius of a Bacon, think with the acuteness of Voltaire, compose with the ease and elegance of Rousseau, and, like them, produce master-pieces worthy of posterity in order to obtain it.

The love of fame, as well in the cottage as on the throne or in the camp, stimulates the mind to the performance of those actions which are most likely to survive mortality and live beyond the grave, and which, when achieved, render the evening of life as brilliant as its morning. "The praises (says Plutarch) bestowed upon great and exalted minds, only spur on and rouse their emulation—like a rapid torrent, the glory which they have already acquired hurries them irresistibly on to every thing that is great and noble. They never consider themselves sufficiently rewarded. Their present actions are only pledges of what may be expected from them; and they would blush not to live faithful to their glory, and to render it still more illustrious by the noblest actions."

The ear which would be deaf to servile adulation and insipid compliment, will listen with pleasure to the enthusiasm with which Cicero exclaims, "Why should we dissem-

ble what it is impossible for us to conceal? Why should we not be proud of confessing candidly that we all aspire to *fame?* The love of praise influences all mankind, and the greatest minds are the most susceptible of it. The philosophers who most preach up a contempt for fame, prefix their names to their works; and the very performances in which they deny ostentation, are evident proofs of their vanity and love of praise. Virtue requires no other reward for all the toils and dangers to which she exposes herself than that of fame and glory. Take away this flattering reward, and what would remain in the narrow career of life to prompt her exertions? If the mind could not launch into the prospect of futurity, or the operations of the soul were to be limited to the space that bounds those of the body, she would not weaken herself by constant fatigues, nor weary herself with continual watchings and anxieties—she would not think even life itself worthy of a struggle; but their lives in the breast of every good man a principle which unceasingly prompts and inspirits him to the pursuit of a fame beyond the present hour—a fame not commensurate to our mortal existence, but co-extensive with the latest posterity. Can we, who every day expose ourselves to dangers for our country, and have never passed one moment of our lives without anxiety or trouble, meanly think that all consciousness shall be buried with us in the grave? If the greatest men have been careful to preserve their bustos and their statues, those images, not of their minds, but of their bodies, ought we not rather to transmit to posterity the resemblance of our wisdom and virtue? For my part, at least, I acknowledge that in all my actions I conceived that I was disseminating and transmitting my fame to the remotest corners and the latest ages of the world. Whether, therefore, my consciousness of this shall cease in the grave, or, as some have thought, shall survive as a property of the soul, is of little importance. Of

one thing I am certain, that at this instant I feel from the reflection the flattering hope and a delightful sensation."

This is the true enthusiasm with which preceptors should inspire the bosoms of their young pupils. Whoever shall be happy enough to light up this generous flame, and increase it by constant application, will see the object of his care voluntarily relinquish the pernicious pleasures of youth, enter with virtuous dignity on the stage of life, and add, by the performance of the noblest actions, new luster to science and brighter rays to glory. The desire of extending our fame by noble deeds, and of increasing the good opinion of mankind by a dignified conduct and real greatness of soul, confers advantages which neither illustrious birth, elevated rank, nor great fortune can bestow; and which, even on the throne, are only to be acquired by a life of exemplary virtue, and an anxious attention to the suffrages of posterity.

There is no character, indeed, more likely to acquire future fame than the satirist, who dares to point out and condemn the follies, the prejudices and the growing vices of the age, in strong and nervous language. Works of this description, however they may fail to correct the prevailing manners of the times, will operate on succeeding generations, and extend their influence and reputation to the latest posterity. True greatness operates long after envy and malice have pursued the modest merit which produced it to the grave. O, Lavater! those base, corrupted souls who only shine a moment, and are forever extinguished, will be forgotten, while the memory of thy name is carefully cherished, and thy virtues fondly beloved; thy foibles will be no longer remembered, and the qualities which distinguished and adorned thy character will alone be reviewed. The rich variety of thy language, the judgment with which thou hast boldly intended and created new expressions, the nervous brevity of thy style, and thy striking picture of human manners, will, as

the author of "The Characters of German Poets and Prose Writers" has predicted, extend the fame of thy "Fragments upon Physiognomy" to the remotest posterity. The accusation that Lavater, who was capable of developing such sublime truths, and of creating almost a new language, gave credit to the juggles of Gesner, will then be forgot; and he will enjoy the life after death which Cicero seemed to hope for with so much enthusiasm.

Solitude, indeed, affords a pleasure to an author of which no one can deprive him, and which far exceeds all the honors f the world. He not only anticipates the effect his work will produce, but while it advances toward completion, feels the delicious enjoyment of those hours of serenity and composure which his labors procure. What continued and tranquil delight flows from this successive composition! Sorrows fly from this elegant occupation. O! I would not exchange one single hour of such tranquility and content for all those flattering illusions of public fame with which the mind of Tully was so incessantly intoxicated. A difficulty surmounted, a happy moment seized, a proposition elucidated, a sentence neatly and elegantly turned, or a thought happily expressed, are salutary and healing balms, counter-poisons to melancholy, and belong exclusively to a wise and well-formed solitude.

To enjoy himself without being dependant on the aid of others, to devote to employments not perhaps entirely useless, those hours which sorrow and chagrin would otherwise steal from the sum of life, is the great advantage of an author; and with this advantage alone I am perfectly contented.

Solitude not only elevates the mind, but adds new strength to its powers. The man who has not courage to conquer the prejudices and despise the manners of the world, whose greatest dread is the imputation of singularity, who forms his opinion and regulates his conduct upon the judgment and actions of others, will certainly never possess

sufficient strength of mind to devote himself to voluntary solitude; which, it has been well observed, is as necessary to give a just, solid, firm, and forcible tone to our thoughts, as an intercourse with the world is to give them richness; brilliancy, and just appropriation.

The mind, employed on noble and interesting subjects, disdains the indolence that stains the vacant breast. Enjoying freedom and tranquility, the soul feels the extent of its energies with greater sensibility, and displays powers which it was before unconscious of possessing: the faculties sharpen; the mind becomes more clear, luminous, and extensive; the perception more distinct; the whole intellectual system, in short, exacts more from itself in the leisure of solitude than in the bustle of the world. But to produce these happy effects, solitude must not be reduced to a state of tranquil idleness and inactive ease, of mental numbness, or sensual stupor; it is not sufficient to be continually gazing out of a window with a vacant mind, or gravely walking up and down the study in a ragged *robe-de-chambre* and worn-out slippers: for the mere exterior of tranquility cannot elevate or increase the activity of the soul, which must feel an eager desire to roam at large, before it can gain that delightful liberty and leisure which at the same instant improves the understanding and corrects the imagination. The mind, indeed, is enabled by the strength it acquires under the shades of retirement, to attack prejudices, and combat errors, with the unfailing prowess of the most athletic champion; for the more it examines into the nature of things, the closer it brings them to its view, and exposes with unerring clearness, all the latent properties they possess. An intrepid and reflecting mind, when retired within itself, seizes with rapture on truth the moment it is discovered; looks round with a smile of pity and contempt on those who despise its charms; hears without dismay the invectives which envy and malice let loose against

him; and nobly disdains the hue and cry which the ignorant multitude raise against him, the moment he elevates his hand to dart against them one of the strong and invincible truths he has discovered in his retreat.

Solitude diminishes the variety of those troublesome passions which disturb the tranquility of the human mind, by combining and forming a number of them into one great desire; for although it may certainly become dangerous to the passions, it may also, thanks to the dispensations of Providence! produce very salutary effects. If it disorder the mind, it is capable of effecting its cure. It extracts the various propensities of the human heart, and unites them into one. By this process we feel and learn not only the nature, by the extent of all the passions, which rise up against us like the angry waves of a disordered ocean, to overwhelm us in the abyss; but philosophy flies to our aid, divides their force, and if we do not yield to them an easy victory by neglecting all opposition to their attacks, virtue and self-denial bring gigantic reinforcements to our assistance, and ensure our success. Virtue and resolution, in short, are equal to every conflict, the instant we learn that one passion is to be conquered by another.

The mind, exalted by the high and dignified sentiments it acquires by lonely meditation, becomes proud of its superiority, withdraws itself from every base and ignoble object, and avoids, with heroic virtue, the effect of dangerous society. A noble mind observes the sons of worldly pleasure mingling in scenes of riot and debauchery, without being seduced; hears it in vain echoed from every side, that incontinence is among the first propensities of the human heart, and that every young man of fashion and spirit must as necessarily indulge his appetite for the fair sex, as the calls of hunger or of sleep. Such a mind perceives that libertism and dissipation not only enervate youth, and render the feelings callous

to the charms of virtue and principles of honesty, but that it destroys every manly resolution, renders the heart timid, decreases exertion, damps the generous warmth and fine enthusiasm of the soul, and in the end, totally annihilates all its powers. The youth, therefore, who seriously wishes to sustain an honorable character on the theater of life, must forever renounce the habits of indolence and luxury; and when he no longer impairs his intellectual faculties by debauchery, or renders it necessary to attempt the renovation of his languid and debilitated constitution by access of wine and luxurious living, he will soon be relieved from the necessity of consuming whole mornings on horseback in a vain search of that health from change of scene, which temperance and exercise would immediately bestow.

All men, without exception, have something to learn; whatever may be the distinguished rank which they hold in society, they can never be truly great by their personal merit. The more the faculties of the mind are exercised in the tranquility of retirement, the more conspicuous they appear; and should the pleasures of debauchery be the ruling passion, learn, O, young man! that nothing will so easily subdue it as an increasing emulation in great and virtuous actions, a hatred of idleness and frivolity, the study of the sciences, a frequent communication with your own heart, and that high and dignified spirit which views with disdain every thing that is vile and contemptible. This generous and high disdain of vice, this fond and ardent love of virtue, discloses itself in retirement with dignity and greatness, where the passion of high achievement operates with greater force than in any other situation. The same passion which carried Alexander into Asia confined Diogenes to his tub. Heraclitus descended from his throne to devote his mind to the search of truth. He who wishes to render his knowledge useful to mankind, must first study the world; not too intensely, or for any long

duration, or with any fondness for its follies; for the follies of the world enervate and destroy the vigor of the mind. Cæsar tore himself from the embraces of Cleopatra, and became the master of the world; while Antony took her as a mistress to his bosom, sunk indolently into her arms, and by his effeminacy lost not only his life, but the government of the Roman empire.

Solitude, indeed, inspires the mind with notions too refined and exalted for the level of common life. But a fondness for high conceptions, and a lively, ardent disposition, discovers to the votaries of solitude, the possibility of supporting themselves on hights in which would derange the intellects of ordinary men. Every object that surrounds the solitary man enlarges the faculties of his mind, improves the feelings of his heart, elevates him above the condition of the species, and inspires his soul with views of immortality. Every day in the life of a man of the world, seems as if he expected it would be the last of his existence. Solitude amply compensates for every privation, while the devotee of worldly pleasures conceives himself lost if he is deprived of visiting a fashionable assembly, of attending a favorite club, of seeing a new play, of patronizing a celebrated boxer, or admiring some foreign novelty which the hand-bills of the day have announced.

I could never read without feeling the warmest emotions, the following passage of Plutarch: "I live," says he, "entirely upon history; and while I contemplate the pictures it presents to my view, my mind enjoys a rich repast from the representation of great and virtuous characters. If the actions of men produce some instances of vice, corruption, and dishonesty, I endeavor, nevertheless, to remove the impression, or to defeat its effect. My mind withdraws itself from the scene, and free from every ignoble passion, I attach myself to those high examples of virtue which are so agreeable

and satisfactory, and which accord so completely with the genuine feelings of our nature."

The soul, winged by these sublime images, flies from the earth, mounts as it proceeds, and casts an eye of disdain on those surrounding clouds which, as they gravitate to the earth, would impede its flight. At a certain hight the faculties of the mind expand, and the fibers of the heart dilate. It is, indeed, in the power of every man to perform more than he undertakes; and therefore it is both wise and praiseworthy to attempt every thing that is morally within our reach. How many dormant ideas may be awakened by exertion! and then, what a variety of early impressions, which were seemingly forgot, revive, and present themselves to our pens!—We may always accomplish more than we conceive, provided passion fans the flame which the imagination has lighted; for life is insupportable when unanimated by the soft affections of the heart.

Solitude leads the mind to those sources from whence the grandest conceptions are most likely to flow. But alas! it is not in the power of every person to seize the advantages solitude bestows. Were every noble mind sensible of the extensive information, of the lofty and sublime ideas, of the exquisitely fine feelings which result from occasional retirement, they would frequently quit the world, even in the earliest periods of youth, to taste the sweets of solitude, and lay the foundation for a wise old age.

In conducting the low and petty affairs of life, common sense is certainly a more useful quality than even genius itself. Genius, indeed, or that fine enthusiasm which carries the mind into its highest sphere, is clogged and impeded in its ascent by the ordinary occupations of the world, and seldom regains its natural liberty and pristine vigor except in solitude. Minds anxious to reach the regions of philosophy and science have, indeed, no other means of rescuing themselves from

the burden and thraldom of worldly affairs. Sickened and disgusted with the ridicule and obloquy they experience from an ignorant and presumptuous multitude, their faculties become, as it were, extinct, and mental exertion dies away; for the desire of fame, that great incentive to intellectual achievement, can not long exist where merit is no longer rewarded by praise. But remove such minds from the oppression of ignorance, of envy, of hatred, of malice; let them enjoy liberty and leisure; and with the assistance of pen, ink, and paper, they will soon take an ample revenge, and their productions excite the admiration of the world. How many excellent understandings remain in obscurity, merely on account of the possessor being condemned to follow worldly employments, in which little or no use of the mind is required, and which, for that reason, ought to be exclusively bestowed on the ignorant and illiterate vulgar! But this circumstance can seldom happen in solitude, where the mental faculties, enjoying their natural freedom, and roaming unconfined through all parts and properties of nature, fix on those pursuits most congenial to their powers, and most likely to carry them into their proper sphere.

The unwelcome reception which solitary men frequently meet with in the world, becomes, when properly considered, a source of enviable happiness; for to be universally beloved would prove a great misfortune to him who is meditating in tranquility the performance of some great and important work; every one would then be anxious to visit him, to solicit his visits in return, and to press for his attendance on all parties. But though philosophers are fortunately not in general the most favored guests in fashionable societies, they have the satisfaction to recollect, that it is not ordinary or common characters against whom the public hatred and disgust are excited. There is always something great in that man against whom the world exclaims, at whom every one throws a stone,

and on whose character all attempt to fix a thousand crimes, without being able to prove one. The fate of a man of genius, who lives retired and unknown, is certainly more enviable; for he will then enjoy the pleasure of undisturbed retirement, and naturally imagining the multitude to be ignorant of his character, will not be surprised that they should continually misinterpret and pervert both his words and actions, or that the efforts of his friends to undeceive the public with respect to his merit should prove abortive.

Such was, in the mistaken view of the world, the fate of the celebrated Count Schaumbourg Lippe, better known by the appellation of Count de Buckebourg. No character, throughout Germany, was ever more traduced or so little understood; and yet he was worthy of being enrolled among the highest names his age or country ever produced. When I first became acquainted with him, he lived in almost total privacy, quite retired from the world, on a small paternal farm, in the management of which consisted all his pleasure and employment. His exterior appearance was, I confess, rather forbidding, and prevented superficial observers from perceiving the extraordinary endowments of his brilliant and capacious mind. The Count de Lacy, formerly ambassador from the court of Madrid to Petersburgh, related to me during his residence at Hanover, that he led the Spanish army against the Portuguese at the time that they were commanded by the Count de Buckebourg; and that when the officers discovered him, as they were reconnoitering the enemy with their glasses, the singularity of his appearance struck them so forcibly that they immediately exclaimed, "Are the Portuguese commanded by Don Quixote?" The ambassador, however, who possessed a liberal mind, did justice in the highest terms to the merit and good conduct of Buckebourg in Portugal; and praised, with enthusiastic admiration, the goodness of his mind and the greatness of his character. Viewed at a distance, his

appearance was certainly romantic, and his heroic countenance, with flowing hair, his tall and meager figure, and particularly the extraordinary length of his visage, might, in truth, recall some idea of the celebrated knight of La Mancha; but, on a closer view, both his person and manners dispelled the idea; for his features, full of fire and animation, announced the elevation, sagacity, penetration, kindness, virtue and serenity of his soul; and the most sublime and heroic sentiments were as familiar and natural to his mind, as they were to the noblest characters of Greece and Rome.

The Count was born in London, and possessed a disposition as whimsical as it was extraordinary. The anecdotes concerning him, which I heard from his relation, a German prince, are perhaps not generally known. Fond of contending with the English in every thing, he laid a wager that he would ride a horse from London to Edinburgh backward, that is, with the horse's head toward Edinburgh and the Count's face toward London; and in this manner he actually rode through several counties in England. He traveled through the greater part of that kingdom on foot, in the disguise of a common beggar. Being informed that a part of the current of the Danube, above Regensberg, was so strong and rapid that no one dared to swim across it, he made the attempt, and ventured so far that he nearly lost his life. A great statesman and profound philosopher, at Hanover, related to me, that during the war in which the Count commanded the artillery in the army of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, against the French, he one day invited a number of Hanoverian officers to dine with him in his tent. While the company were in the highest state of festive mirth and gayety, a succession of cannon balls passed directly over the head of the tent. "The French can not be far off!" exclaimed the officers. "O! I assure you," replied the Count, "they are not near us;" and he begged the gentlemen would make

themselves perfectly easy, resume their seats, and finish their dinner. Soon afterwards, a cannon ball carried away the top of the tent, when the officers again arose precipitately from their seats, exclaiming, "The enemy are here!" "No, no," replied the count, "the enemy are not here; therefore I must request, gentlemen, that you will place yourselves at the table, and sit still, for you may rely on my word." The firing recommenced, and the balls flew about in the same direction; the officers, however remained fixed to their seats, and while they ate and drank in seeming tranquility, whispered to each other their surmises and conjectures on this singular entertainment. At length the Count, rising from his seat, addressed the company in these words, "Gentlemen, I was willing to convince you how well I can rely upon the officers of my artillery. I ordered them to fire, during the time we continued at dinner, at the pinnacle of my tent; and you have observed with what punctuality they obeyed my orders."

Characteristic traits of a man anxious to inure himself and those about him to arduous and difficult exploits, will not be useless or unentertaining to curious and speculative minds. Being one day in company with the Count at Fort Wilhelmstein, by the side of a magazine of gunpowder which he had placed in the room immediately under that in which he slept, I observed to him, that I should not be able to sleep very contentedly there during some of the hot nights of summer. The Count, however, convinced me, though I do not now remember the means, that *the greatest danger and no danger are one and the same thing.* When I first saw this extraordinary man, which was in the company of two officers, the one English, the other Portuguese, he entertained me for two hours upon the physiology of Haller, whose works he knew by heart. The ensuing morning he insisted on my accompanying him in a little boat, which he rowed himself, to Fort

Wilhelmstein, built under his direction in the middle of the water, from plans which he showed me of his own drawing. One Sunday, on the great parade at Pyrmont, surrounded by a vast concourse of men and women, occupied in music, dancing and gallantries, he entertained me during the course of two hours on the same spot, and with as much serenity as if we had been alone, by detailing the various controversies respecting the existence of God, pointing out their defective parts, and convincing me that he surpassed every writer in his knowledge of the subject. To prevent my escaping from this lecture he held me fast the whole time by one of the buttons of my coat. At his country seat at Buckebourg, he showed me a large folio volume, in his own hand-writing, upon "The Art of defending a small town against a great force." The work was completely finished and intended as a present to the king of Portugal. There were many passages in it, which the Count did me the favor to read relating to Swisserland, a country and people which he considered as invincible; pointing out to me not only all the important places they might occupy against an enemy, but discovering passes before unknown, and through which a cat would scarce be able to crawl. I do not believe that anything was ever written of higher importance to the interests of my country than this work; for it contains satisfactory answers to every objection ever that has or can be made. My friend M. Moyse Mendelsohm, to whom the Count read the preface to this work while he resided at Pyrmot, considered it as a master-piece of fine style and sound reasoning; for the Count when he pleased, wrote the French language with nearly as much elegance and purity as Voltaire; while in the German he was labored, perplexed, and diffuse. I must, however, add this in his praise, that on his return from Portugal, he studied for many years under two of the most acute masters in Germany; first, Abbt; and afterwards Herder. Many persons who, from a

closer intimacy and deeper penetration, have had greater opportunities of observing the conduct and character of this truly great and extraordinary man, relate of him a variety of anecdotes, equally instructive and entertaining. I shall only add one observation more respecting his character, availing myself of the words of Shakspeare; the Count Guillaume de Schaumbourg Lippe

"* * * carries no dagger,
He has a lean and hungry look;
* * * * but he's not dangerous;
* * * * * he reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite thro' the deeds of men. He loves no plays
* * * * * he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing."

Such was the character, always misunderstood, of this solitary man; and such a character might fairly indulge a contemptuous smile, on perceiving the mistaken sneers of an ignorant multitude. But what must be the shame and confusion of the partial judges of mankind, when they behold the monument which the great Mendelsohm has raised to his memory; and the faithful history of his life and manners which a young author is about to publish at Hanover; the profound sentiments, the elegant style, the truth, and the sincerity of which will be discovered and acknowledged by impartial posterity?

The men who, as I have frequently observed, are disposed to ridicule this illustrious character on account of his long visage, his flowing hair, his enormous hat, or his little sword, might be pardoned, if, like him, they were philosophers or heroes. The mind of the Count, however, was too exalted to be moved by their insulting taunts, and he never smiled upon

the world, or upon men, either with spleen or with contempt Feeling no hatred, indulging no misanthropy, his looks beamed kindness on all around him; and he enjoyed with dignified composure the tranquility of his rural retreat in the middle of a thick forest, either alone, or in the company of a fond and virtuous wife, whose death so sensibly afflicted even his firm and constant mind, that it brought him almost to an untimely grave. The people of Athens laughed at Themistocles, and openly reviled him even in the streets, because he was ignorant of the manners of the world, the *ton* of good company, and that accomplishment which is called good breeding. He retorted, however, upon these ignorant railers with the keenest asperity. "It is true," said he, "I never play upon the lute; but I know how to raise a small and inconsiderable city to greatness and to glory."

Solitude and philosophy may inspire sentiments which appear ludicrous to the eye of worldly folly; but they banish all light and insignificant ideas, and prepare the mind for the grandest and most sublime conceptions. Those who are in the habit of studying great and exalted characters, of cultivating refined and elevated sentiments, unavoidably contract a singularity of manners which may furnish ample materials for ridicule. Romantic characters always view things differently from what they really are or can be; and the habit of invariably contemplating the sublime and beautiful, renders them, in the eyes of the weak and wicked, insipid and insupportable. Men of this disposition always acquire a high and dignified demeanor, which shocks the feelings of the vulgar; but it is not on that account the less meritorious. Certain Indian philosophers annually quitted their solitude to visit the palace of their sovereign, where each of them, in his turn, delivered his advice upon the government of the state, and upon the changes and limitations which might be made in the laws; but he who three successive times communicated false or unimportant observations, lost for

one year the privilege of appearing in the presence-chamber. The practice is well calculated to prevent the mind from growing romantic; but there are many philosophers of a different description, who, if they had the same opportunity, would not meet with better success.

Plotinus requested the Emperor Gallienus to confer on him a small city in Campania, and the territory appendant to it, promising to retire to it with his friends and followers, and to realize in the government of it the Republic of Plato. It happened then, however, as it frequently happens now in many courts, to philosophers much less chimerical than Plotinus, the statesman laughed at the proposal, and told the emperor that the philosopher was a fool, in whose mind even experience had produced no effect.

The history of the greatness and virtues of the ancients operate in solitude with the happiest effect. Sparks of that bright flame which warmed the bosoms of the great and good, frequently kindled unexpected fires. A lady in the country, whose health was impaired by nervous affections, was advised to read with attention the history of the Greek and Roman empires. At the expiration of three months, she wrote to me in the following terms, "You have inspired my mind with a veneration for the virtues of the ancients. What are the buzzing race of the present day, when compared with those noble characters? History heretofore was not my favorite study; but now I live only on its pages. While I read of the transactions of Greece and Rome, I wish to become an actor in the scenes. It has not only opened to me an inexhaustible source of pleasure, but it has restored me to health. I could not have believed that my library contained so inestimable a treasure; my books will now prove more valuable to me than all the fortune I possess; in the course of six months you will no longer be troubled with my complaints. Plutarch is more delightful to me than the charms of dress,

the triumphs of coquetry, or the sentimental effusions which lovers address to those mistresses who are inclined to be all heart; and with whom Satan plays tricks of love with the same address as a dilletante plays tricks of music on the violin." This lady, who is really learned, no longer fills her letters with the transactions of her kitchen and poultry yard; she has recovered her health, and will experience hereafter, I conjecture, as much pleasure among her hens and chickens, as she did before from the pages of Plutarch.

But although the immediate effects of such writing can not be constantly perceived, except in solitude, or in the society of select friends, yet they may remotely be productive of the happiest consequences. The mind of a man of genius, during his solitary walks, is crowded with a variety of ideas, which, on being disclosed, would appear ridiculous to the common herd of mankind; a period, however, arrives, at which they lead men to the performance of actions worthy of immortality. The national songs composed by that ardent genius, Lavater, appeared at a moment when the republic was in a declining state, and the temper of the times unfavorable to their reception. The Schintzuach society, by whose persuasion they had been written, had given some offence to the French ambassador; and from that time all of the measures which the members adopted were decried with the most factious virulence in every quarter. Even the great Haller, who had been refused admission, considering them as disciples of Rousseau, whom he hated; and as enemies to orthodoxy, which he loved; pointed his epigrams against them in every letter I received from him; and the committee for the reformation of literature at Zurich, expressly prohibited the publication of these excellent lyric compositions, on the curious pretence that it was dangerous and improper to stir up a dunghill. No poet of Greece, however, ever wrote with more fire and force in favor of his country than Lavater did in favor of the liberties

of Swisserland. I have heard children chaunt these songs with patriotic enthusiasm; and seen the finest eyes filled with tears of rapture while their ears listened to the singers. Joy glowed in the breasts of the Swiss peasants to whom they were sung; their muscles swelled, and the blood inflamed their cheeks. Fathers have, within my own knowledge, carried their infant children to the chapel of the celebrated William Tell, to join in full chorus the song which Lavater composed upon the merits of that great man. I have myself made the rocks re-echo to my voice, by singing these songs to the music which the feelings of my heart composed for them while wandering over the fields, and climbing among the famous mountains where those heroes, the ancestors of our race, signalized themselves by their immortal valor. I fancied that I saw them still armed with their knotted clubs, breaking to pieces the crowned helmets of Germany; and although inferior in numbers, forcing the proud nobility to seek their safety by a precipitate and ignominious flight. These, it may be said, are romantic notions, and can only please solitary and recluse men, who see things differently from the rest of the world. But great ideas sometimes now make their way in spite of the most obstinate opposition, and operating, particularly in republics, by insensible degrees, sow the seeds of those principles and true opinions, which, as they arrive to maturity, prove so efficacious in times of political contest and public commotion.

Solitude, therefore, by instilling high sentiments of human nature, and heroic resolutions in defense of its just privileges, unites all the qualities which are necessary to raise the soul and fortify the character, and forms an ample shield against the shafts of envy, hatred, or malice. Resolved to think and to act, upon every occasion in opposition to the sentiments of narrow minds, the solitary man attends to all the various opinions he meets with, but is astonished at none. Without

being ungrateful for the just and rational esteem his intimate friends bestow upon him; remembering, too, that friends, always partial, and inclined to judge too favorably, frequently, like enemies, suffer their feelings to carry them too far; he boldly calls upon the public voice to announce his character to the world at large; displays his just pretensions before this impartial tribunal, and demands that justice which is due.

But solitude, although it exalts the sentiments, is generally conceived to render the mind unfit for business; this, however, is, in my opinion, a great mistake. To avoid tottering through the walks of public duty, it must be of great utility to have acquired a firm step, by exercising the mind in solitude on those subjects which are likely to occur in public life. The love of truth is best preserved in solitude, and virtue there acquires greater consistency; but I confess truth is not always convenient in business, nor the rigid exercise of virtue propitious to worldly success.

The *great* and the *good*, however, of every clime, revere the simplicity of manners and the singleness of heart which solitude produces. It was these inestimable qualities which, during the fury of the war between England and France, obtained the philosophic Jean Andre de Luc the reception he met with at the court of Versailles; and inspired the breast of the virtuous, the immortal De Vergennes with the desire to reclaim, by the mild precepts of a philosopher, the refractory citizens of Geneva, which all his remonstrances, as prime minister of France, had been unable to effect. De Luc, at the request of Vergennes, made the attempt, but failed of success; and France, as is well known, was obliged to send an army to subdue the Genevese. It was upon his favorite mountains that this amiable philosopher acquired that simplicity of manners which he still preserves amidst all the luxuries and seductions of London, where he endures with firmness all the wants, refuses all the indulgencies, and subdues all the desires of

social life. While he resided at Hanover, I only remarked one single instance of luxury in which he indulged himself; when anything vexed his mind, he chewed a small morsel of sugar, of which he always carried a small supply in his pocket.

Solitude not only creates simplicity of manners, but prepares and strengthens the faculties for the toils of busy life. Fostered in the bosom of retirement, the mind becomes more active in the world and its concerns, and retires again into tranquility to repose itself and prepare for new conflicts. Pericles, Phocion and Epaminondas laid the foundation of all their their greatness in solitude, and acquired there rudiments which all the language of the schools can not teach—the rudiments of their future lives and actions. Pericles, while preparing his mind for any important object, never appeared in public, but immediately refrained from feasting, assemblies and every species of entertainment; and during the whole time that he administered the affairs of the republic, he only went once to sup with a friend, and left him at an early hour. Phocion immediately resigned himself to the study of philosophy; not from the ostentatious motive of being called a *wise man*, but to enable himself to conduct the business of the state with greater resolution and effect. Epaminondas, who had passed his whole life in the delights of literature and in the improvement of his mind, astonished the Thebans by the military skill and dexterity which he all at once displayed at the battles of Mantinea and Leuctra, in the first of which he rescued his friend Pelopidas; but it was owing to the frugal use he made of his time, to the attention with which he devoted his mind to every pursuit he adopted, and to that solitude which his relinquishment of every public employment afforded him. His countrymen, however, forced him to abandon his retreat, gave him absolute command of the army, and by his military skill he saved the republic.

Petrarch, also a character I never contemplate but with

increasing sensibility, formed his mind, and rendered it capable of transacting the most complicated political affairs, by the habit he acquired in solitude. He was, indeed, what persons frequently become in solitude, choleric, satirical, and petulant; and has been severely reproached with having drawn the manners of his age with too harsh and sombrous a pencil, particularly the scenes of infamy which were transacted at the court of Avignon, under the pontificate of Clement VI.; but he was a perfect master of the human heart, knew how to manage the passions with uncommon dexterity, and to turn them directly to his purposes. The abbe de Sades, the best historian of his life, says, "he is scarcely known, except as a tender and elegant poet, who loved with ardor, and sung, in all the harmony of verse, the charms of his mistress." But was this in reality the whole of his character? Certainly not. Literature, long buried in the ruins of barbarity, owes the highest obligations to his pen; he rescued some of the finest works of antiquity from dust and rotteness; and many of those precious treasures of learning, which have since contributed to delight and instruct mankind, were discovered by his industry, corrected by his learning and sagacity, and multiplied in accurate copies at his expense. He was the great restorer of elegant writing and true taste; and by his own compositions, equal to any that ancient Rome, previous to its subjugation, produced, purified the mind, reformed the manners of the age, and extirpated the prejudices of the times. Pursuing his studies with unremitting firmness to the hour of his death, his last work surpassed all that had preceded it. But he was not only a tender lover, an elegant poet, and a correct and classical historian, but an able statesman also, to whom the most celebrated sovereigns of his age confided every difficult negotiation, and consulted in their most important concerns. He possessed, in the fourteenth century, a degree of fame, credit and influence, which no man of the

present day, however learned, has ever acquired. Three popes, an emporer, a sovereign of France, a king of Naples, a crowd of cardinals, the greatest princes, and the most illustrious nobility of Italy, cultivated his friendship, and solicited his correspondence. In the several capacities of statesman, minister, and ambassador, he was employed in transacting the greatest affairs, and by that means was enabled to acquire and disclose the most useful and important truths. These high advantages he owed entirely to solitude, with the nature of which as he was better acquainted than any other person, as he cherished it with greater fondness, and resounded its praise with higher energy; and at length preferred his leisure and liberty to all the enjoyments of the world. Love, to which he had consecrated the prime of life, appeared, indeed, for a long time, to enervate his mind; but suddenly abandoning the soft and effeminate style in which he breathed his sighs at Laura's feet, he addressed kings, emperors, and popes, with manly boldness, and with that confidence which splendid talents and a high reputation always inspires. In an elegant oration, worthy of Demosthenes and Cicero, he endeavored to compose the jarring interests of Italy; and exhorted the contending powers to destroy with their confederated arms, the barbarians, those common enemies of their country, who were ravaging its very bosom, and preying on its vitals. The enterprizes of Rienzi, who seemed like an agent sent from heaven to restore the decayed metropolis of the Roman empire to its former splendor, were suggested, encouraged, directed, and supported by his abilities. A timid emperor was roused by his eloquence to invade Italy, and induced to seize upon the reins of government, as successor to the Cæsars. The pope, by his advice, removed *the holy chair* which had been transported to the borders of the Rhine, and replaced it on the banks of the Tiber; and at a moment even when he confessed, in one of his letters,

that his mind was distracted with vexation, his heart torn wi. love, and his whole soul disgusted with men and measures, Pope Clement VI. confided to his negotiation an affair of great difficulty at the court of Naples, in which he succeeded to the highest satisfaction of his employer. His residence at courts, indeed, had rendered him ambitious, busy and enterprising; and he candidly acknowledged, that he felt a pleasure on perceiving a hermit, accustomed to dwell only in woods, and to saunter over plains, running through the magnificent palaces of cardinals, with a crowd of courtiers in his suite. When John Visconti, archbishop and prince of Milan, and sovereign of Lombardy, who united the finest talents with an ambition so insatiable, that it threatned to swallow up all Italy, had the happiness to fix Petrarch in his interests, by inducing him to accept of a seat in his council, the friends of the philosopher whispered one among another, "This stern republican who breathed no sentiments but those of liberty and independence; this untamed bull, who roared so loud at the slighest shadow of the yoke; who could endure no fetters but those of love, and who even felt those too heavy; who has refused the first offices at the court of Rome, because he disdained to wear golden chains; has at length submitted to be shackled by the tyrant of Italy; and this great apostle of solitude, who could no longer live, except in the tranquility of the groves, now contentedly resides amidst the tumults of Milan." "My friends," replied Petrarch, "have reason to arraign my conduct. Man has not a greater enemy than himself. I acted against my taste and inclination. Alas! through the whole course of our lives, we do those things which we ought not to have done, and leave undone what most we wish to do." But Petrarch might have told his friends, "I was willing to convince you how much a mind, long exercised in solitude, can perform, when engaged in the business of the world; how much a previous retirement enables a man to

transact the affairs of public life with ease, firmness, dignity, and effect."

The courage which is necessary to combat the prejudices of the multitude, is only to be acquired by a contempt of the frivolous transactions of the world, and, of course is seldom possessed, except by solitary men. Worldly pursuits so far from adding strength to the mind, only weaken it; in like manner as any particular enjoyment too frequently repeated, dulls the edge of the appetite for every pleasure. How often do the best contrived and most excellent schemes fail, merely for want of sufficient courage to surmount the difficulties which attend their execution!—How many happy thoughts have been stifled in their birth, from an apprehension that they were too bold to be indulged!

An idea has prevailed, that truth can only be freely and boldly spoken under a republican form of government; but this idea is certainly without foundation. It is true that in aristocracies, as well as under a more open form of government, where a single demagogue unfortunately possesses the sovereign power, common sense is too frequently construed into a public offense. Where this absurdity exists, the mind must be timid, and the people in consequence deprived of their liberty. In a monarchy every offense is punished by the sword of justice; but in a republic, punishments are inflicted by prejudices, passions, and state necessity. The first maxim which, under a republican form of government, parents endeavor to instil into the minds of their children, is, *not to make enemies;* and I remember, when I was very young, replying to this sage counsel, "My dear mother, do you not know that he who has no enemies is a poor man?" In a republic the citizens are under the authority and jealous observation of a multitude of sovereigns; while in a monarchy the reigning prince is the only man whom his subjects are bound to obey. The idea of living under the control of a number of masters,

intimidates the mind; whereas love and confidence in *one* alone, raises the spirits and renders the people happy.

But in all countries, and under every form of government, the rational man who renounces the useless conversation of the world, who lives a retired life, and who, independently of all he sees, of all that he hears, forms his notions in tranquility, by an intercourse with the heroes of Greece, of Rome, and of Great Britain, will acquire a steady and uniform character, obtain a noble style of thinking, and rise superior to every vulgar prejudice.

These are the observations I had to make respecting the influence of occasional solitude upon the mind. They disclose my real sentiments on this subject; many of them, perhaps, undigested, and many more certainly not well expressed. But I shall console myself for these defects, if this chapter affords only a glimpse of those advantages which, I am persuaded, a rational solitude is capable of affording to the minds and manners of men; and if that which follows shall excite a lively sensation of the true, noble and elevated pleasures retirement is capable of producing by a tranquil and feeling contemplation of nature, and by an exquisite sensibility for every thing that is good and fair.

CHAPTER III.

INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE UPON THE HEART.

The highest happiness which is capable of being enjoyed in this world, consists in *peace of mind*. The wise mortal who renounces the tumults of the world, restrains his desires and inclinations, resigns himself to the dispensation of the Creator, and looks with an eye of pity on the frailties of his fellow-creatures; whose greatest pleasure is to listen among the rocks to the soft murmurs of a cascade; to inhale, as he walks along the plains the refreshing breezes of the zephyrs, and to dwell in the surrounding woods on the melodious accents of the aërial choristers, may, by the simple feelings of his heart, obtain this valuable blessing.

To taste the charms of retirement, it is not necessary to divest the heart of its emotions. The world may be renounced without renouncing the enjoyment which the tear of sensibility is capable of affording. But to render the heart susceptible of this felicity, the mind must be able to admire, with equal pleasure, nature in her sublimest beauties, and in the modest flower that decks the valleys; to enjoy at the same time that harmonious combination of parts which expands the soul, and those detached portions of the whole which present the softest and most agreeable images to the mind. Nor are these enjoyments exclusively reserved for those strong and energetic bosoms whose sensations are lively as they are delicate, and in which, for that reason, the good and the bad make the same impression; the purest happiness, the most enchanting tranquility, are also granted to men of colder feelings, and whose imagina-

sions are less bold and lively; but to such characters the portraits must not be so highly colored, nor the tints so sharp; for as the bad strikes them less, so also they are less susceptible of livelier impressions.

The high enjoyments which the heart feels in solitude are derived from the imagination. The touching aspect of delightful nature, the variegated verdure of the forest, the resounding echoes of an impetuous torrent, the soft agitation of the foliage, the warblings of the tenants of the groves, the beautiful scenery of a rich and extensive country, and all those objects that compose an agreeable landscape, take such complete possession of the soul, and so entirely absorb our faculties, that the sentiments of the mind are by the charms of the imagination instantly converted into sensations of the heart, and the softest emotions give birth to the most virtuous and worthy sentiments. But to enable the imagination thus to render every object fascinating and delightful, it must act with freedom and dwell amidst surrounding tranquility. O! how easy it is to renounce noisy pleasures and tumultuous assemblies for the enjoyment of that philosophic melancholy which solitude inspires!

Religious awe and rapturous delight are alternately excited by the deep gloom of forests, by the tremendous hight of broken rocks, and by the multiplicity of majestic and sublime objects, which are combined within the site of a delightful and extensive prospect. The most painful sensations immediately yield to the serious, soft, and solitary reveries to which the surrounding tranquility invites the mind; while the vast and awful silence of nature exhibits the happy contrast between simplicity and grandeur; and as our feelings become more exquisite, so our admiration becomes more intense, and our pleasures more complete.

I had been for many years familiar with all that nature is capable of producing in her sublimest works, when I first saw

a garden in the vicinity of Hanover, and another upon a much larger scale at Marienwerder, about three miles distant, cultivated in the English style of rural ornament. I was not then apprized of the extent of that art which sports with the most ungrateful soil, and, by a new species of creation, converts barren mountains into fertile fields and smiling landscapes. This magic art makes an astonishing impression on the mind, and captivates every heart, not insensible to the delightful charms of cultivated nature. I can not recollect without shedding tears of gratitude and joy, a single day of this early part of my residence in Hanover, when, torn from the bosom of my country, from the embraces of my family, and from every thing that I held dear in life, my mind, on entering the little garden of my deceased friend, M. de Hinuber, near Hanover, immediately revived, and I forgot for a moment, both my country and my grief. The charm was new to me. I had no conception that it was possible, upon so small a plot of ground, to introduce at once the enchanting variety and the noble simplicity of nature. But I was then convinced, that her aspect alone is sufficient, at first view, to heal the wounded feelings of the heart, to fill the bosom with the highest luxury, and to create those sentiments in the mind, which can, of all others, render life desirable.

This new re-union of art and nature, which was not invented in China, but in England, is founded upon a rational and refined taste for the beauties of nature, confirmed by experience, and by the sentiments which a chaste fancy reflects on a feeling heart.

But in the garden I have before mentioned, every point of view raises the soul to heaven, and affords the mind sublime delight; every bank presents a new and varied scene which fills the heart with joy; nor while I feel the sensation which such scenes inspire, will I suffer my delight to be diminished by discussing whether the arrangement might have been made in a

better way, or permit the dull rules of cold and senseless masters to destroy my pleasure. Scenes of serenity, whether created by tasteful art, or by the cunning hand of nature, always bestow, as a gift from the imagination, tranquility to the heart. While a soft silence breathes around me, every object is pleasant to my view; rural scenery fixes my attention, and dissipates the grief that lies heavy at my heart; the loveliness of solitude enchants me, and, subduing every vexation, inspires my soul with benevolence, gratitude, and content. I return thanks to my Creator for endowing me with an imagination, which, though it has frequently caused the trouble of my life, occasionally leads me, in the hour of my retirement, to some friendly rock, on which I can climb, and contemplate with greater composure the tempests which I have escaped.

There are, indeed, many Anglicised gardens in Germany, laid out so whimsically absurd, as to excite no other emotions than those of laughter and disgust. How extremely ridiculous is it to see a forest of poplars, scarcely sufficient to supply a chamber stove with fuel for a week; mere molehills dignified with the name of mountains; caves and aviaries, in which tame and savage animals, birds and amphibious creatures, are attempted to be represented in their native grandeur; bridges of various kinds, thrown across rivers, which a couple of ducks would drink dry; and wooden fishes swimming in canals, which the pump every morning supplies with water! These unnatural beauties are incapable of affording any pleasure to the imagination.

A celebrated English writer has said, that "solitude, on the first view of it, inspires the mind with terror, because every thing that brings with it the idea of privation is terrific, and therefore sublime like space, darkness, and silence."

The species of greatness which results from the idea of infinity, can only be rendered delightful by being viewed at a proper distance. The Alps, in Swisserland, and particularly

near the Canton of Berne, appear inconceivably majestic; but on a near approach, they excite ideas certainly sublime, yet mingled with a degree of terror. The eye, on beholding those immense and enormous masses piled one upon the other, forming one vast and uninterrupted chain of mountains, and rearing their lofty summits to the skies, conveys to the heart the most rapturous delight while the succession of soft and lively shades which they throw around the scene, tempers the impression, and renders the view as agreeable as it is sublime. On the contrary, no feeling heart can, on a close view, behold this prodigious wall of rocks without experiencing involuntary trembling. The mind contemplates with affright their eternal snows, their steep ascents, their dark caverns, the torrents which precipitate themselves with deafening clamor from their summits, the black forests of firs that overhang their sides, and the enormous fragments of rocks, which time and tempests have torn away. How my heart thrilled when I first climbed through a steep and narrow track upon these sublime deserts, discovering, every step I made, new mountains rising over my head, while upon the least stumble, death menaced me in a thousand shapes below! But the imagination immediately kindles when you perceive yourself in the midst of this grand scene of nature, and reflect from these hights on the weakness of human power, and the imbecility of the greatest monarchs!

The history of Swisserland evinces, that the natives of these mountains are not a degenerate race of men, and that their sentiments are as generous as their feelings are warm. Bold and spirited by nature, the liberty they enjoy gives wings to their souls, and they trample tyrants and tyranny under their feet. Some of the inhabitants of Swisserland, indeed, are not perfectly free; though they all possess notions of liberty, love their country, and return thanks to the Almighty for that happy tranquility which permits each individual to live quietly under his vine, and enjoy the shade of

his fig-tree; but the most pure and genuine liberty is always to be found among the inhabitants of these stupendous mountains.

The Alps, in Swisserland, are inhabited by a race of men sometimes unsocial, but always good and generous. The hardy and robust characters given to them by the severity of their climate, is softened by pastoral life. It is said by an English writer, that he who has never heard a storm in the Alps, can form no idea of the continuity of the lightning, the rolling and burst of the thunder which roars around the horizon of these immense mountains; and the people never enjoying better habitations than their own cabins, nor seeing any other country than their own rocks, believe the universe to be an unfinished work, and a scene of unceasing tempest. But the skies do not always lower, the thunder does not incessantly roll, nor the lightnings continually flash; immediately after the most dreadful tempests, the hemisphere clears itself by slow degrees, and becomes serene. The dispositions of the Swiss follow the nature of their climate; kindness succeeds to violence, and generosity to the most brutal fury; this may be easily proved, not only from the records of history, but from recent facts.

General Redin, an inhabitant of the Alps, and a native of the Canton of Schwitz, enlisted very early in life into the Swiss Guards, and attained the rank of lieutenant-general in that corps. His long residence at Paris and Versailles, however, had not been able to change his character; he still continued a true Swiss. The new regulation made by the king of France, in the year 1764, relating to this corps, gave great discontent to the canton of Schwitz. The citizens, considering it as an innovation extremely prejudicial to their ancient privileges, threw all the odium of the measure on the lieutenant-general, whose wife, at this period, resided on his estate in the Canton, where she endeavored to raise a number of young

recruits; but the sound of the French drum had become so disgusting to the ears of the citizens, that they beheld with indignation the white cockade placed in the hats of the deluded peasants. The magistrate, apprehensive that this ferment might ultimately cause an insurrection among the people, felt it his duty to forbid Madame de Redin to continue her levies. The lady requested he would certify his prohibition in writing; but the magistrate not being disposed to carry matters to this extremity against the Court of France, she continued to beat up for the requested number of recruits. The inhabitants of the Canton, irritated by this bold defiance of the prohibition, summoned a General Diet, and Madame de Redin appeared before the assembly of Four Thousand. "The drum," said she, "shall never cease to sound, until you give me such a certificate as may justify my husband to the French court for not completing the number of his men." The Assembly accordingly granted her the required certificate, and enjoining her to procure the interest and interposition of her husband with the court, in favor of her injured country, waited in anxious expectation that his negotiation would produce a favorable issue. Unhappily the court of Versailles rejected all solicitation on the subject, and by this means drove the irritated and impatient inhabitants beyond the bounds of restraint. The leading men of the Canton pretended that the new regulation endangered not only their civil liberties, but, what was dearer to them, their religion. The general discontent was at length fomented into popular fury. A General Diet was again assembled, and it was publicly resolved not to furnish the king of France in future with any troops. The treaty of alliance concluded in the year 1713, was torn from the public register, and general de Redin ordered instantly to return from France with the soldiers under his command, upon pain, if he refused, of being irrevocably banished from the republic. The obedient general obtained permission from the

king to depart with his regiment from France, and entering Schwitz, the metropolis of the Canton, at the head of his troops, with drums beating and colors flying, marched immediately to the church, where he deposited his standards upon the great altar, and falling on his knees, offered up his thanks to God. Rising from the ground, and turning to his affectionate soldiers, who were dissolved in tears, he discharged their arrears of pay, gave them their uniforms and accouterments, and bid them forever farewell. The fury of the populace, on perceiving within their power the man whom the whole country considered as the perfidious abettor, and traitorous adviser of the new regulation, by which the court of Versailles had given such a mortal blow to the liberties of the country, greatly increased; and he was ordered to disclose before the General Assembly the origin of that measure, and the means by which it had been carried on, in order that they might learn their relative situation with France, and ascertain the degree of punishment that was due to the offender. Redin, conscious that, under the existing circumstances, eloquence would make no impression on minds so prejudiced against him, contented himself with cooly declaring, in a few words, that the cause of framing a new regulation was publicly known, and that he was as innocent upon the subject as he was ignorant of the cause of his dismission. "The traitor then will not confess!" exclaimed one of the most furious members; "Hang him on the next tree—cut him to pieces." These menaces were instantly repeated throughout the Assembly; and while the injured soldier continued perfectly tranquil and undismayed, a party of the people, more daring than the rest, jumped upon the tribune, where he stood surrounded by the judges. A young man, his godson, was holding a *parapluie* over his head, to shelter him from the rain, which at this moment poured down in incessant torrents, when one of the multitude immediately broke the *parapluie* in pieces with his

stick, exclaiming, "Let the traitor be uncovered!" This exclamation conveyed a correspondent indignation into the bosom of the youth, who instantly replied, "My god-father a betrayer of his country! O! I was ignorant, I assure you, of the crime alleged against him; but since it is so, let him perish! where is the rope? I will be the first to put it around the traitor's neck!" The magistrates instantly formed a circle round the General, and with uplifted hands exhorted him to avert the impending danger, by confessing that he had not opposed the measures of France with sufficient zeal, and to offer to the offended people his whole fortune, as an atonement for his neglect; representing to him that these were the only means of redeeming his liberty, and perhaps his life. The undaunted soldier, with perfect tranquility and composure, walked through the surrounding circle to the side of the tribune, and while the whole Assembly anxiously expected to hear an ample confession of his guilt, made a sign of silence with his hand: "Fellow-citizens," said he, "you are not ignorant that I have been two-and-forty years at the French establishment. You know, and many among you, who were with me in the service, can testify its truth, how often I have faced the enemy, and the manner in which I conducted myself in battle. I considered every engagement as the last day of my life. But here I protest to you, in the presence of that Almighty Being who knows all our hearts, who listens to all our words, and who will hereafter judge all our actions, that I never appeared before an enemy with a mind more pure, a conscience more tranquil, a heart more innocent, than at present I possess; and if it is your pleasure to condemn me because I refuse to confess a treachery of which I have not been guilty, I am now ready to resign my life into your hands." The dignified demeanor with which the General made this declaration, and the air of truth which accompanied his words, calmed the fury of the

Assembly, and saved his life. Both he and his wife, however, immediately quitted the Canton; she entering into a convent at Uri, and he retiring to a cavern among the rocks, where he lived two years in solitude. Time, at length subdued the anger of the people, and softened the General's sense of their injustice. He returned to the bosom of his country, rewarded its ingratitude by the most signal services, and made every individual recollect and acknowledge the integrity of their magnanimous countryman. To recompense him for the injuries and injustice he had suffered, they elected him bailli, or chief officer of the Canton; and afforded him an almost singular instance of their constancy and affection, by successively conferring on him three times this high and important dignity. This is the characteristic disposition of the Swiss who inhabit the Alps; alternately violent and mild; and experiencing, as the extremes of a delighted or vexed imagination happen to prevail, the same vicissitudes as their climate. The rude scenes of greatness which these stupendous mountains and vast deserts afford, render the Swiss violent in sentiment, and rough in manners; while the tranquility of their fields, and the smiling beauties of their vallies, soften their minds, and render their hearts kind and benevolent.

English artists confess that the aspect of nature in Swisserland is too sublime and majestic for the pencil of art faithfully to reach; but how exquisite must be the enjoyments they feel upon those romantic hills, in those delightful vallies, upon the charming borders of those still and transparent lakes, where nature unfolds her various charms, and appears in the highest pomp and splendor; where the majestic oaks, the deep embowering elms, and dark green firs, which cover and adorn those immense forests, are pleasingly interspersed with myrtles, almond trees, jasmines, pomegranates, and vines, which offer their humbler beauties to the view, and variegate the scene!

Nature is in no country of the globe more rich and various than in Swisserland. It was the scenery around Zurich, and the beauties of its adjoining lake, that first inspired the Idylls of the immortal Gessner.

These sublime beauties, while they elevate and inflame the heart, give greater action and life to the imagination than softer scenes; in like manner as a fine night affords a more august and solemn spectacle than the mildest day.

In coming from Frescati, by the borders of the small lake of Nemi, which lies in a deep valley, so closely sheltered by mountains and forests, that the winds are scarcely permitted to disturb its surface, it is impossible not to exclaim with an English poet, that here—

> "Black melancholy sits, and round her throws
> A death-like silence, and a dread repose;
> Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
> Shades every flower, and darkens every green;
> Deepens the murmurs of the falling floods,
> And breathes a browner horror on the woods."

But how the soul expands, and every thought becomes serene and free, when, from the garden of the Capuchins, near Albano, the eye suddenly discovers the little melancholy lake, with Frescati and all its rural vallies on one side; on the other, the handsome city of Albano, the village and castle of Riccia and Gensano, with their hills beautifully adorned with clusters of the richest vines; below, the extensive plains of Campania, in the middle of which, Rome, formerly the mistress of the world, raises its majestic head; and lastly, beyond all these objects, the hills of Tivoli, the Appenines, and the Mediterranean sea!

How often, on the approach of Spring, has the magnificent valley, where the ruins of the residence of Rodolpho de Hapsburg rise upon the side of a hill, crowned with woods of variegated verdure, afforded me the purest and most ineffable

delight! There the rapid Aar descends in torrents from the lofty mountains; sometimes forming a vast basin in the vale; at others, precipitating through the narrow passages across the rocks, winding its course majestically through the middle of the vast and fertile plains; on the other side the Ruffs, and, lower down, the Limmat, bring their tributary streams, and peaceably unite them with the waters of the Aar. In the middle of this rich and verdant scene, I beheld the Royal Solitude, where the remains of the emperor Albert I. repose in silence, with those of many princes of the house of Austria, counts, knights, and gentlemen, killed in battle by the gallant Swiss. At a distance I discovered the valley where lie the ruins of the celebrated city of Vindonissa, upon which I have frequently sat and reflected upon the vanity of human greatness. Beyond this magnificent country, ancient castles raise their lofty heads upon the hills! and the far distant horizon is terminated by the sublime summits of the Alps. In the midst of all this grand scenery, my eyes were instinctively cast down into the deep valley immediately below me, and continually fixed upon the little village where I first drew my breath. It is thus that the sublime or beautiful operates differently on the heart! the one exciting fear and terror, the other only creating soft and agreeable sensations; but both tending to enlarge the sphere of the imagination, and enabling us more completely to seek enjoyment within ourselves.

Pleasures of this description may, indeed, be enjoyed, without visiting the romantic solitudes of either Swisserland or Italy. There is no person who may not, while he is quietly traversing the hills and dales, learn to feel how much the aspect of nature may, by the assistance ef the imagination, affect the heart. A fine view, the freshness of the air, an unclouded sky, and the joys of the chase, give sensations of health, and make every step seem too short. The privation of all the ideas of dependence, accompanied by domestic

comfort, useful employments and innocent recreations, produce a sense of thought, and fertility of imagination, which present to the mind the most agreeable images, and touch the heart with the most delightful sensations. It is certainly true, that a person possessed of a fine imagination may be much happier in prison, than he could possibly be without imagination amidst the most magnificent scenery. But even to a mind deprived of this happy faculty, the lowest enjoyments of rural life, even the common scenery of harvest time, is capable of performing miracles on his heart. Alas! who has not experienced in the hours of languor and disgust, the powerful effects which a contemplation of the pleasures that surround the poorest peasant's cot is capable of affording! How fondly the heart participates in all his homely joys! With what freedom, cordiality, and kindness, we take him by the hand, and listen to his innocent and artless tales! How suddenly do we feel an interest in all his little concerns; an interest which, while it unvails, refines and meliorates the latent inclinations of our hearts!

The tranquility of retired life, and the view of rural scenes, frequently produce a quietude of disposition, which while it renders the noisy pleasures of the world insipid, enables the heart to seek the charms of solitude with increased delight.

The happy indolence peculiar to Italians, who, under the pleasures of a clear, unclouded sky, are always poor, but never miserable, greatly augments the feelings of the heart; the mildness of the climate, the fertility of their soil, their peaceful religion, and their contented nature, compensate for every thing. Dr. Moore, an English traveler, whose works afford me great delight, says, that "the Italians are the greatest loungers in the world; and while walking in the fields, or stretched in the shade, seem to enjoy the serenity and genial warmth of their climate with a degree of luxurious

indulgence peculiar to themselves. Without ever running into the daring excesses of the English, or displaying the frisky vivacity of the French, or the stubborn phlegm of the Germans, the Italian populace discover a species of sedate sensibility to every scource of enjoyment, from which, perhaps, they derive a greater degree of happiness than any of the others."

Relieved from every afflicting and tormenting object, it is, perhaps, impossible for the mind not to resign itself to agreeable chimeras and romantic sentiments; but this situation, notwithstanding these disadvantages, has its fair side. Romantic speculations may lead the mind into certain extravagancies and errors, from whence base and contemptible passions may be engendered; may habituate it to a light and frivolous style of thinking; and, by preventing it from directing its faculties to rational ends, may obscure the prospect of true happiness; for the soul cannot easily quit the illusion on which it dwells with such fond delight; the ordinary duties of life, with its more noble and substantial pleasures, are perhaps thereby obstructed; but it is very certain that romantic sentiments do not always render the mind that possesses them unhappy. Who, alas! is so completely happy in reality as he frequently has been in imagination!

Rosseau, who, in the early part of his life, was extremely fond of romances, feeling his mind hurried away by the love of those imaginary objects with which that species of composition abounds, and perceiving the facility with which they may be enjoyed, withdrew his attention from every thing about him, and by this circumstance laid the foundation of that taste for solitude which he preserved to an advanced period of his life; a taste in appearance, dictated by depression and disgust, and attributed by him to the irresistible impulse of an affectionate, fond, and tender heart, which, not being able to find in the regions of philosophy and truth

sentiments sufficiently warm and animated, was constrained to seek its enjoyments in the sphere of fiction.

But the imagination may, in retirement, indulge its wanderings to a certain degree without the risk of injuring either the sentiments of the mind or the sensations of the heart. O! if the friends of my youth in Swisserland knew how frequently, during the silence of the night, I pass with them those hours which are allotted to sleep; if they were apprized that neither time nor absence can efface the remembrance of their former kindness from my mind, and that this pleasing recollection tends to dissipate my grief, and to cast the vail of oblivion over my woes; they would perhaps, also rejoice to find that I still live among them in imagination, though I may be dead to them in reality.

The solitary man, whose heart is warmed with refined and noble sentiments, can not be unhappy. While the stupid and vulgar bewail his fate, and conceive him to be the victim of corroding care and loathed melancholy, he frequently tastes the most delightful pleasure. The French entertained a notion that Rousseau was a man of gloomy and dejected disposition; but he was certainly not so for many years of his life, particularly when he wrote to M. de Malesherbes, the chancellor's son, in the following terms: "I can not express to you, Sir, how sensibly I am affected by perceiving that you think me the most unhappy of mankind; for as the public will, no doubt, entertain the same sentiment of me as you do, it is to me a source of real affliction! O! if my sentiments were really known, every individual would endeavor to follow my example. Peace would then reign throughout the world; men would no longer seek to destroy each other; and wickedness, by removing the great incentives to it, no longer exist. But it may be asked how I could find employment in solitude?—I answer, in my own mind; in the whole universe; in every thing that does, in every thing that

can exist; in all that the eye finds beautiful in the real, or the imagination in the intellectual world. I assembled about me every thing that is flattering to the heart, and regulated my pleasures by the moderation of my desires. No! The most voluptuous have never experienced such refined delights; and I have always enjoyed my chimeras much more than if they had been realized."

This is certainly the language of enthusiasm; but, ye stupid vulgar! who would not prefer the warm fancy of this amiable philosopher to your cold and creeping understandings? Who would not willingly renounce your vague conversation, your deceitful felicities, your boasted urbanity, your noisy assemblies, puerile pastimes, and inveterate prejudices, for a quiet and contented life in the bosom of a happy family? Who would not rather seek in the silence of the woods, or upon the daisied borders of a peaceful lake, those pure and simple pleasures of nature, so delicious in recollection and productive of joys so pure, so affecting, so different from your own?

Eclogues, which are representatives of rural happiness in its highest perfection, are also fictions; but they are fictions of the most pleasing and agreeable kind. True felicity must be sought in retirement, where the soul, disengaged from the torments of the world, no longer feels those artificial desires which render it unhappy both in prospect and fruition. Content with little, satisfied with all, surrounded by love and innocence, we perceive in retirement, the golden age, as described by poets, revived; while in the world every one regrets its loss. The regret, however, is unjust; for those enjoyments were not peculiar to that happy period; and each individual may, whenever he pleases, form his own Arcadia. The beauties of a chrystal spring, a silent grove, a daisied meadow, chasten the feelings of the heart, and afford at all times, to those who have a taste for nature, a permanent and pure delight.

The origin of poetry," says Pope, "is ascribed to that age which succeeded the creation of the world; as the keeping of flocks seems to have been the first employment of mankind, the most ancient sort of poetry was pastoral. It is natural to imagine, that the leisure of these ancient shepherds admitting and inviting some diversion, none was so proper to that solitary and sedentary life as singing, and that in their songs they took occasion to celebrate their own felicity. From hence a poem was invented, and afterward improved to a perfect image of that happy time, which, by giving us an esteem for the virtues of a former age, might recommend them to the present."

These agreeable though fictitious descriptions of the age of innocence and virtue, communicate joy and gladness to our hearts; and we bless the poet, who in the ecstacy of his felicity, contributes to render others as happy as himself. Sicily and Zurich have produced two of these benefactors to mankind. The aspect of nature never appears more charming, the bosom never heaves with such sweet delight, the heart never beats more pleasantly, the soul never feels more perfect happiness, than is produced by reading the Idylls of Theocritus and Gessner.

By these easy simple modes the beauties of nature are made, by the assistance of the imagination, to operate forcibly on the heart. The mind, indeed, drawn away by these agreeable images, often resigns itself too easily to the illusions of romance; but the ideas they create generally amend the heart without injuring the understanding, and spread some of the sweeter flowers along the most thorny paths of human life.

Leisure, the highest happiness upon earth, is seldom enjoyed with perfect satisfaction, except in solitude. Indolence and indifference do not always afford leisure; for true leisure is frequently found in that interval of relaxation which divides a painful duty from the agreeable occupations of literature and

philosophy. P. Scipio was of this opinion when he said, that *he was never less idle than when he had most leisure*, and that *he never was less alone than when alone*. Leisure is not to be considered a state of intellectual torpidity, but a new incentive to further activity; it is sought by strong and energetic minds, not as *an end*, but as *a means* of restoring lost activity; for whoever seeks happiness in a situation merely quiescent, seeks for a phantom that will elude his grasp. Leisure will never be found in mere rest; but will follow those who seize the first impulse to activity; in which, however, such employments as best suit the extent and nature of different capacities, must be preferred to those which promise compensation without labor, and enjoyment without pain.

Thus rural retirement dries up those streams of discontent which flow so plentifully through public life; changes most frequently the bitterest feeling into the sweetest pleasure; and inspires an ecstacy and content unknown to the votaries of the world. The tranquility of nature buries in oblivion the criminal inclinations of the heart; renders it blithe, tender, open, and confident; and, by wisely managing the passions, and preventing an overheated imagination from fabricating fancied woes, strengthens in it every virtuous sensation.

In towns the solitude which is necessary to produce this advantage cannot be conveniently practised. It seems, indeed, no very difficult task for a man to retire into his chamber, and, by silent contemplation, to raise his mind above the mean consideration of sensual objects; but few men have sufficient resolution to perform it; for, within doors, matters of business every moment occur, and interrupt the chain of reflection; and without, whether alone or in company, a variety of accidents may happen, which will confound our vain wisdom, aggravate the painful feelings of the heart, and weaken the finer powers of the mind.

Rousseau was always miserable during his residence at Paris.

This extraordinary genius, it is true, wrote his immortal works in that agitated metropolis; but the moment he quitted his study, and wandered through the streets, his minds was bewildered by a variety of heterogeneous sentiments, his recollection vanished; and this brilliant writer and philosopher, who was so intimately acquainted with the most intricate labyrinths of the human heart, was reduced to the condition of a child. But in the country we issue from the house in perfect safety, and feel increasing cheerfulness and satisfaction. Tired with meditation, the rural recluse has only to open the doors of his study, and enjoy his walk, while tranquility attends his steps, and new pleasures present themselves to his view on every turn. Beloved by all around him, he extends his hand with cordial affection to every man he meets. Nothing occurs to vex and irritate his mind. He runs no risk of being tortured by the supercilious behavior of some haughty female, proud of her descent, or of enduring the arrogant egotism of an upstart peer; is in no danger of being crushed beneath the rolling carriages of Indian nabobs; nor dares frontless vice, on the authority of mouldy parchments, attack his property, or presumptuous ignorance offer the least indignity to his modest virtue.

A man, indeed, by avoiding the tumultuous intercourse of society, and deriving his comforts from his own breast, may, even in Paris, or any other metropolis, avoid these unpleasant apprehensions, if his nerves be firm and his constitution strong; for to a frame disjointed by nervous affections, every object is irritating, and every passion trembling alive. The passions are the gales by which man must steer his course through the troubled ocean of life; they fill the sails which give motion to the soul; and when they become turbulent and impetuous, the vessel is always in danger, and generally runs aground. The petty cares and trifling vexations of life, however, give but short-lived disturbance to a heart free from remorse. Philosophy teaches us to forget past uneasiness, to

forbear idle speculations of approaching felicity, and to rest contented with present comforts, without refining away our existing happiness by wishing that which is really good to be still better. Every thing is much better than we imagine. A mind too anxious in the expectation of happiness is seldom satisfied, and generally mixes with its highest fruition a certain portion of discontent. The stream of content must flow from a deliberate disposition in our minds to learn what is good, and a determined resolution to seek for and enjoy it, however small the portion may be.

The content, however, which men in general so confidently expect to find in rural retirement, is not to be acquired by viewing objects either with indiscriminate admiration or supine indifference. He who without labor, and without a system of conduct previously digested and arranged, hopes for happiness in solitude, will yawn with equal fatigue at his cottage in the country and his mansion in town; while he who keeps himself continually employed, may in the deepest solitude, by the mere dint of labor, attain true tranquility and happiness.

Petrarch, in his solitude at Vaucluse, would have experienced this tranquility, if his bosom had not been disturbed by love; for he perfectly understood the art of managing his time. "I rise," said he, "before the sun, and on the approach of day wander contemplatively along the fields, or retire to study. I read, I write, I think, I vanquish indolence, banish sleep, avoid luxury, and forget sensuality. From morning till night I climb the barren mountains, traverse the humid vallies, seek the deepest caves, or walk, accompanied only by my thoughts, along the banks of my river. I have no society to distract my mind; and men daily become less annoying to me; for I place them either far before or far behind me. I recollect what is past, and contemplate on what is to come. I have found an excellent

expedient to detach my mind from the world. I cultivate a fondness for my place of residence, and I am persuaded that I could be happy any where except at Avignon. In my retreat at Vaucluse, where I am at present, I occasionally find Athens, Rome, or Florence, as the one or the other of those places happens to please the prevailing disposition of my mind. Here I enjoy all my friends, as well as those who have long since entered the vale of death, and of whom I have no knowledge, but what their works afford."

What character, however luxurious, ever felt the same content at any splendid entertainment, as Rosseau experienced in his humble meal! "I return home," says he, "with tired feet, but with a contented mind, and experience the calmest repose in resigning myself to the impression of objects, without exercising thought, indulging imagination, or doing any thing to interrupt the peaceful felicity of my station. The table is already spread on my lawn, and furnished with refreshments. Surrounded by my small and happy family, I eat my supper with healthy appetite, and without any appearance of servitude or dependence to annoy the love and kindness by which we are united. My faithful dog is not a subservient slave, but a firm friend, from whom, as we always feel the same inclination, I never exact obedience. The gayety of the mind throughout the evening testifies that I lived alone throughout the day; for, being seldom pleased with others, and never when visitors have disturbed me, with myself, I sit during the whole evening of the day when company has interrupted me, either grumbling or in silence; so at least my good housekeeper has remarked; and since she mentioned it, I have from my own observation found it universally true. Having thus made my humble and cheerful meal, I take a few turns round my little garden, or play some favorite air upon my spinette, and experience upon my pillow a soft content more sweet, if possible, than even undisturbed repose."

At the village of Richterswyl, situated a few leagues fr. Zurich, and surrounded by every object the most smiling, beautiful, and romantic that Swisserland presents, dwells a celebrated physician. His soul, like the scenery of nature which surrounds him, is tranquil and sublime. His habitation is the temple of health, of friendship, and of every peaceful virtue. The village rises on the borders of the lake, at a place where two projecting points form a fine bay of nearly half a league. On the opposite shores, the lake, which is not quite a league in extent, is enclosed from the north to the east by pleasant hills covered with vineyards, intermixed with fertile meadows, orchards, fields, groves, and thickets, with little hamlets, churches, villas, and cottages scattered up and down the scene. A wide and magnificent amphitheater, which no artist has yet attempted to paint, except in detached scenes, opens itself from the east to the south. The view towards the higher part of the lake, which on this side is four leagues long, presents to the eye jutting points of land, detached aytes, the little town of Rapperschwyl, built on the side of a hill, and a bridge which reaches from one side of the lake to the other. Beyond the town the inexhaustible valley extends itself in a half circle to the sight; and upon the foreground rises a peak of land which swells as it extends into beautiful hills. Behind them, at the distance of about half a league, is a range of mountains, covered with trees and verdure, and interspersed with villages and detached houses; beyond which, at a still greater distance, are discovered the fertile and majestic Alps, twisted one among the other, and exhibiting, alternately, shades of the lighest and darkest azure; and in the back ground high rocks, covered with eternal snows, lift their towering heads, and touch the skies. On the south side of this rich, enchanting, and incomparable scene, the amphitheater is extended by another range of mountains reaching toward the west; and at the feet of these mountains, on the borders of the lake, lies the

village of Richterswyl, surrounded by rich fallows and fertile pastures, and overhung by forests of firs. The streets of the village, which in itself is extremely clean are neatly paved; and the houses, which are mostly built of stone, are painted on the outside. Pleasant walks are formed along the banks of the lake, and lead quite around the town, through groves of fruit-trees and shady forests, up to the very summit of the hills. The traveler, struck with the sublime and beautiful scenery that every where surrounds him, stops to contemplate with eager curiosity the eager beauties which ravish his sight; and while his bosom swells with excess of pleasure, his suspended breath bespeaks his fear of interrupting the fullness of his delight. Every acre of this charming country is in the highest state of cultivation and improvement. Every hand is at work; and men, women and children of every age and of every description, are all usefully employed.

The two houses of the physician are each of them surrounded by a garden; and although situated in the center of the village, are as rurally sequestered as if they had been built in the bosom of the country. Through the gardens, and close beneath the chamber of my valued friend, runs a pure and limpid stream, on the opposite of which, at an agreeable distance, is the high road; where, almost daily numbers of pilgrims successfully pass in their way to the hermitage. From the windows of these houses, and from every part of the gardens, you behold toward the south, at the distance of about a league, the majestic Ezel-berg rear its lofty head, which is concealed in forests of deep green furs; while on its declivity hangs a neat little village, with a handsome church, upon the steeple of which the sun suspends his darting rays, and shows its career is nearly finished. In the front is the lake of Zurich, whose peaceful water is secured from the violence of the tempests, and whose transparent surface reflects the beauties of its delightful banks.

During the silence of the night, if you repair to the chamber

windows of this enchanting mansion, or walk through its gardens, to take the exhaling fragrance of the shrubs and flowers, while the moon, rising in unclouded majesty over the summit of the mountains, reflects on the smooth surface of the water a broad beam of light; you hear, during this awful sleep of nature, the sound of the village clocks, echoing from the opposite shore; and, on the Richterswyl side, the shrill proclamation of the watchmen, blended occasionally with the barkings of the faithful house-dog. At a distance you hear the boats gliding gently along the stream, dividing the water with their oars, and perceive them, as they cross the moon's translucent beam, playing among the sparkling waves.

Riches and luxury are nowhere to be seen in the happy habitation of this wise philanthrophist. His chairs are made of straw; his tables are worked from the wood of the country; and the plates and dishes on which he entertains his friends, are all of earthen-ware. Neatness and convenience reign throughout. Drawings, paintings, and engravings, of which he has a large well-chosed collection, are his sole expense. The earliest beams of Aurora light the humble apartment where this philosophic sage sleeps in undisturbed repose, and awake him to new enjoyments every day. As he rises from his bed, the cooing of the turtle-doves, and the morning songs of various kind of birds, who make their nightly nests in an adjoining aviary, salute his ears, and welcome his approach. The first hour of the morning, and the last at night, are sacred to himself; but he devotes all the intermediate hours of every day to a sick and afflicted multitude, who daily attend on him for advice and assistance. The benevolent exercise of his professional skill, indeed, engrosses almost every moment of his life, but it constitutes his highest happiness and joy. The inhabitants of the mountains of Swisserland, and of the vallies of the Alps, flock to his house, and endeavor in vain to find language capable of expressing to him the grateful feelings

of their hearts for the favors they receive from him. Convinced of his affection, satisfied of his medical skill, and believing that the good doctor is equally well acquainted with every subject, they listen with the deepest attention to his words, answer all his inquiries without the least hesitation or reserve, treasure up his advice and counsel with more solicitude than if they were grains of gold, and depart from his presence with more regret, comfort, hope, resignation, and virtuous feelings, than if they had quitted their confessor at the hermitage. It may perhaps be conceived, that after a day spent in this manner, the happiness which this friend to mankind must feel, cannot in any degree be increased. But, when a simple, innocent, and ingenious country girl, whose mind has been almost distracted by the fear of losing her beloved husband, enters his study, and seizing him with transport by the hand, joyfully exclaims, "O! my dear husband, ill as he was only two days since, is now quite recovered! O! my dear Sir, how, shall I thank you!" This philanthropic character feels that transcending felicity, which ought to fill the bosom of a monarch in rendering happiness to his people.

Of this description is the country of Swisserland, where Doctor Hotze, the ablest physician of the present age, resides; a physician and philosopher, whose variety of knowledge, profound judgment, and great experience, have raised him to an equal eminence with Trisssot and Hirtzel, the dearest friends of my heart. It is in this manner that he passes the hours of his life, with uniformity and happiness. Surrounded, except during the two hours I have already mentioned, by a crowd of unfortunate fellow-creatures, who look up to him for relief, his mind, active and full of vigor never knows repose; but his labors are richly rewarded by the high and refined felicity which fills his heart. Palaces, alas! seldom contain such characters. Individuals, however, of every description, may

cultivate and enjoy an equal degree of felicity, although they do not reside among scenes so delightful as those which surround my beloved Hotze at Richtersywl, as those of the convent of Capuchins near Albano, or as those which surround the rural retreat of my sovereign, George III., at Windsor.

Content can only be found in the tranquility of the heart; and in solitude the bosom gladly opens to receive the wished-ed for inmate, and to welcome its attendant virtues. While nature smiles around us, decorated in all its beauties, the heart expands to the cheering scene; every object appears in the most favorable and pleasing point of view; our souls overflow with kind affections; the antipathies created by the ingratitude of the world, instantly vanish; we even forget the vain, the wicked, the profligate characters with whom we were mixed; and being perfectly at peace with ourselves, we feel ourselves at peace with all mankind. But in society the rancorous contentions, which jarring interests daily create, the heavy yoke which subordination is continually imposing, "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," and the shocks which reason and good sense hourly receive from fools in power, and insolent superiors, spread torrents of misery over human life, embitter the happiness of the more worthy, though inferior fellow creatures, poison all pleasure, break through social order, spread thorns in the path of virtue, and render the world a vale of tears.

Blockheads in power are, of all other characters, the most baneful and injurious; they confound all just distinctions; mistake one quality for another; degrade every person and thing to their own level; and, in short, change white into black, and black into white. To escape from the persecution of such characters, men, even of fine talents and ingenuous dispositions, must act like the fox of Saadi, the Persian poet. A person one day observing a fox running with uncommon

speed to earth, called out to him, "Reynard where are you running in so great a hurry? Have you been doing any mischief, for which you are apprehensive of punishment!"—"No, Sir," replied the fox; "my conscience is perfectly clear, and does not reproach me with any thing; but I have just overheard the hunters wish that they had *a camel* to hunt this morning."—"Well, but how does that concern you? you are not *a camel*."—"O! my good Sir," replied the fox, "are you not aware that sagacious heads have always enemies at their heels? and if any one should point me out to those sportsmen, and cry, *there runs a camel*, they would immediately seize me without examining whether I was really the the kind of animal the informer had described me to be." Reynard was certainly right in his conclusion; for men are in general wicked in proportion as they are ignorant or envious, and the only means of eluding their mischievous intentions is to keep out of their way.

The simplicity, regularity, and serenity which accompany retirement, moderate the warmest tempers, guard the heart against the intrusion of inordinate desires, and at length render it invulnerable to the shafts of malice and detraction; while the self-examination it necessarily imposes, teaches us, by exhibiting to our view our own defects, to do justice to the superior merit of others. The delightful solitudes of Lausanne exhibit every where captivating examples of domestic felicity. The industrious citizen, after having faithfully performed his daily task, is sure of experiencing, on his return at evening to his wife and children, real comfort and unalloyed content. The voice of slander, the neglect of ingratitude, the contempt of superiors, and all the mortifications attendant upon worldly intercourse, are forgotten the moment he beholds his happy family ready, with open arms, to receive him, and to bestow upon their friend and benefactor the fond caresses he so justly merits. With what exquisite delight

his beating bosom feels their rapturous affection! If his mind has been vexed by the crosses of life, the ostentation of courts, the insolence of riches, the arrogance of power, or his temper irritated and soured by the base practices of fraud, falsehood, or hypocrisy, he no sooner mixes with those whom he cherishes and supports, than a genial warmth re-animates his dejected heart, the tenderest sentiments inspire his soul, and the truth, the freedom, the probity and the innocence by which he is surrounded, tranquilize his mind, and reconcile him to his humble lot. O! observe him, all ye who are placed in more elevated stations, whether ye enjoy the confidence of statesmen, are the beloved companions of the great, the admired favorites of the fair, the envied leaders of the public taste, of high birth, or of ample fortunes; for if your rich and splendid homes be the seats of jealousy and discord, and the bosoms of your families strangers to that content which the wise and virtuous feel within walls of clay, and under roofs of humble thatch, you are, in comparison, poor indeed.

Characters enervated by prosperity feel the smallest inconvenience as a serious calamity, and, unable to bear the touch of rude and violent hands, require to be treated, like young and tender flowers, with delicacy, and attention; while those who have been educated in the rough school of adversity, walk over the thorns of life with a firm and intrepid step, and kick them from the path with indifference and contempt. Superior to the false opinions and prejudices of the world, they bear with patient fortitude the blow of misfortune, disregard all trifling injuries, and look down with proud contempt on the malice of their enemies, and the infidelity of their friends.

The lofty zephyr, the transparent spring, the well-stored river, the umbrageous forest, the cooling grotto, and the daisied field, however, are not always necessary to enable us

to despise or forget the consequences of adversity. The man who firmly keeps his course, and has courage to live according to his own taste and inclinations, cannot be affected by the little crosses of life, or by the obloquy or injustice of mankind. What we do voluntarily, always affords more pleasure than that which we do by compulsion. The restraints of the world, and the obligations of society, disgust liberal minds, and deprive them, even in the midst of all their splendor and fortune, of that content they seek so anxiously to obtain.

Solitude, indeed, not only tranquilizes the heart, renders it kind and virtuous, and raises it among the malevolence of envy, wickedness, and conceited ignorance, but affords advantages still more valuable. Liberty, true liberty, flies from the tumultuous crowd, and the forced connections of the world. It has been truly observed, that in solitude man recovers from the distraction which had torn him from himself; feels a clear conception of what he once was and may yet become; explores the nature, and discovers the extent, of his free-born character; rejects every thing artificial; is guided by his own sentiments; no longer dreads a severe master or imperious tyrant; and neither suffers the constraints of business or the blandishments of pleasure, to disturb his repose; but, breaking boldly through the shackles of servile habit and arbitrary custom, thinks for himself with confidence and courage, and improves the sensibility of his heart by the sentiments of his mind.

Madame de Stael considered it a great error, to imagine that freedom and liberty could be indulged at court, where the mind, even on the most trifling occasions, is obliged to observe a multitude of ceremonies, where it is impossible to speak one's thoughts, where our sentiments must be adapted to those around us, where every person assumes a control over us, and where we have never the smallest enjoyment of ourselves. "To enjoy ourselves," says she, "we must seek

solitude. It was in the Bastile that I first became acquainted with myself."

A courtier, fearful of every person around him, is continually upon the watch, and tormented incessantly by suspicion; but while his heart is thus a prey to corroding anxiety, he is obliged to appear contented and serene, and, like the old lady, is always lighting one taper to Michael the archangel, and another to the devil, because he does not know for which of them he may have most occasion. A man of a liberal, enlightened mind is as little calculated to perform the office of master of the ceremonies, or to conduct the etiquette of a court, as a woman is to be *a religieuse.*

Liberty and leisure render a rational and active mind indifferent to every other kind of happiness. It was the love of liberty and solitude which rendered the riches and honors of the world so odiuos to Petrarch. Solicited at an advanced period of his life, to act as secretary to several popes, under the tempting offer of great emolument, he replied, "Riches when acquired at the expense of liberty, become the source of real misery. A yoke formed of gold and silver is not less galling and restrictive than one made of wood or iron." And he frankly told his friends and patrons, that to him there was no quantity of wealth equal in value to his ease and liberty: that, as he had despised riches at a time when he was most in need of them, it would be shameful in him to seek them now, when he could more conveniently live without them; that every man ought to apportion the provision for his journey according to the distance he had to travel; and that, having almost reached the end of his course, he ought to think more of his *reception at the inn,* than of his *expenses on the road.*

Petrarch, disgusted by the vicious manners which surrounded the papal chair, retired into solitude when he was only three-and-twenty years of age, and in possession of that ex-

terior, both with respect to person and dress, which forms so essential a part in the character of an accomplished courtier. Nature had decorated him with every pleasing attribute. His fine form struck observers so forcibly, that they stopped as he passed along to admire and point out his symmetry. His eyes were bright and full of fire; his lively countenance proclaimed the vivacity of the mind; and the freshest color glowed on his cheeks; his features were uncommonly expressive; and his whole appearance was manly, elegant, and noble. The natural disposition of his heart, increased by the warm climate of Italy, the first of youth, the seductive charms of the various beauties who resorted to the papal court, from every nation of Europe, and especially the prevailing dissipation of the age, attached him, very early in life, to the society of women. The decorations of dress deeply engaged his attention; and the least spot of improper fold on garments, which were always of the lightest color, seemed to give him real uneasiness. Every form which appeared inelegant was carefully avoided, even in the fashion of his shoes; which were so extremely tight, and cramped him to such a degree, that he would soon have been deprived of the use of his feet, if he had not wisely recollected, that it was much better to displease the eyes of the ladies than to make himself a cripple. To prevent the dress of his hair from being discomposed, he protected it with an anxiety from the rudeness of the winds as he passed along the streets. Devoted, however, as he was to the service of the sex, he maintained a rival fondness for literature, and an inviolable attachment to moral sentiment; and while he celebrated the charms of his fair favorites in choice Italian, he reserved his knowledge of the learned languages for subjects more serious and important. Nor did he permit the warmth of his constitution, or the sensibility of his heart, great and exquisite as they were to debauch his mind, or betray him into the most

trifling indiscretion, without feeling the keenest compunction and repentance. "I wish," said he, "that I had a heart as hard as adamant, rather than be so continually tormented by such seducing passions." The heart of this amiable young man, was, indeed, continually assailed by the crowd of beauties that adorned the papal court; and the power of their charms, and the felicity with which his situation enabled them to enjoy his company, rendered him in some degree their captive; but, alarmed by the approaching torments and disquietudes of love, he cautiously avoided their pleasing snares, and continued, previous to the sight of his beloved Laura, to roam "free and unconquered through the wilds of love."

The practice of the civil law was at this period the only road to eminence at Avignon; but Petrarch detested the venality of the profession; and though he practiced at the bar, and gained many causes by his eloquence, he afterwards reproached himself with it. "In my youth," says he, "I devoted myself to the trade of selling words, or rather fabricating falsehoods; but that which we do against our inclination is seldom attended with success; my fondness was for solitude, and therefore I attended the practice of the bar with aversion and disgust." The secret consciousness, however, which he entertained of his own merit, gave him all the confidence natural to youth; and, filling his mind with that lofty spirit which begets the presumption of being equal to the highest achievements, he relinquished the *bar* for the *church;* but his inveterate hatred of the manners of the Episcopal court prevented his exertions, and retarded his promotion. "I have no hope," said he, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, "of making my fortune in the court of the vicar of Jesus Christ; to accomplish that, I must assiduously attend the palaces of the great, and practice flattery, falsehood and deceit." A task of this kind was too painful to his feelings to perform; not

because he either hated the society of men, or disliked advancement, but because he detested the means he must necessarily have used to gratify his ambition. Glory was his warmest wish, and he ardently endeavored to obtain it; not, indeed, by the ways in which it is usually obtained, but by delighting to walk in the most unfrequented paths, and of course, by retiring from the world. The sacrifices he made to solitude were great and important; but his mind and heart were formed to enjoy the advantages it affords with a superior degree of delight; a happiness which resulted to him from his hatred of a profligate court, and from his love of liberty.

The love of liberty was the secret cause which gave the mind of Rosseau so inveterate a disgust to society, and became in solitude the spring of all his pleasures. His Letters to Malesherbes are as remarkable for the discovery they make of his real disposition, as his Confessions, which have been as much misunderstood as his character. "I mistook for a great length of time," says he, in one of these letters, "the cause of that invincible disgust which I always felt in my intercourse with the world. I attributed it to the mortification of not possessing that quick and ready talent necessary to display in conversation the little knowledge I possessed; and this reflected an idea, that I did not hold that reputation in the opinion of mankind which I conceived I merited. But although, after scribbling many ridiculous things, and perceiving myself sought after by all the world, and honored with much more consideration than even my own ridiculous vanity would have led me to expect, I found that I was in no danger of being taken for a fool; yet, still feeling the same disgust rather augmented than diminished, I concluded that it must arise from some other cause, and that these were not the kind of enjoyments I must look for. What then, in fact, was the cause of it? It was no other than that invincible spirit of liberty which nothing can overcome, and in

competition with which, honor, fortune, and even fame itself, are to me as nothing. It is certain that this spirit of liberty is engendered less by pride than by indolence; but this indolence is incredible; it is alarmed at every thing; it renders the most trifling duties of civil life insupportable. To be obliged to speak a word, to write a letter, or to pay a visit, are to me, from the moment the obligation arises, the severest punishments. This is the reason why, although the ordinary commerce of men is odious to me, the pleasure of private friendship are so dear to my heart; for in the indulgence of private friendships there are no duties to perform; we have only to follow the feelings of the heart, and all is done. This is the reason also why I have so much dreaded to accept of favors; for every act of kindness demands an acknowledgment, and I feel that my heart is ungrateful only because gratitude becomes a duty. The kind of happiness, in short, which pleases me best, does not consist so much in doing what I wish, as in avoiding that which is disagreeable to me. Active life affords no temptations to me. I would much rather do nothing at all than that which I dislike; and I have frequently thought that I should not have lived very unhappily even in the Bastile, provided I was free from any other constraint than that of merely residing within the walls."

An English author asks, "Why are the inhabitants of the rich plains of Lombardy, where nature pours her gifts in such profusion less opulent than those of the mountains of Swisserland? Because freedom, whose influence is more benign than sunshine and zephyrs; who covers the rugged rock with soil, drains the sickly swamp, and clothes the brown heath in verdure; who dresses the laborer's face with smiles, and makes him behold his increasing family with delight and exultation; Freedom has abandoned the fertile fields of Lombardy, and dwells among the mountains of Swisserland." This observa-

tion, though dressed in such enthusiastic expressions, is literally true at Uri, Schwitz, Underwalde, Zug, Glaris, and Appenzel; for those who have more than their wants require, are *rich;* and those who are enabled to think, to speak, and to act as inclination may dictate, are *free.*

Competency and liberty, therefore, are the true sweetners of life. That state of mind, so rarely possessed, in which a man can sincerely say, *I have enough*, is the highest attainment of philosophy. Happiness does not consist in having much, but in having sufficient. This is the reason why kings and princes are seldom happy; for they always desire more than they possess, and are urged incessantly to attempt more than it is in their power to achieve. He who wants little has always enough. "I am contented," says Petrarch, in a letter to his friends, the cardinals Talleyrand and Bologna; "I desire nothing more; I enjoy every thing that is necessary to life, Cincinnatus, Curtius, Fabricius, and Regulus, after having conquered nations, and led kings in triumph, were not so rich as I am. But I should always be poor if I were to open a door to my passions. Luxury, ambition, avarice know no bounds, and desire is an unfathomable abyss. I have clothes to cover me; victuals to support me; horses to carry me; lands to lie down or walk upon while I live, and to receive my remains when I die. What more was any Roman emperor possessed of? My body is healthy, and being engaged in toil, is less rebellious against my mind. I have books of every kind, which are to me inestimable treasures; they fill my soul with a voluptuous delight untinctured with remorse. I have friends whom I consider more precious than any thing I possess, provided their counsels do not tend to abridge my liberty; and I know of no other enemies than those which envy has raised against me."

Solitude not only restrains inordinate desires, but discovers to mankind their real wants; and where a simplicity of manners

prevails, the real wants of men are not only few, but easily satisfied; for being ignorant of those desires which luxury creates, they can have no idea of indulging them. An old country curate, who had all his life resided upon a lofty mountain near the lake of Thun, in the Canton of Berne, was one day presented with a moor-cock. The good old man, ignorant that such a bird existed, consulted with his cook-maid in what manner this rarity was to be disposed of, and they both agreed to bury it in the garden. If we were all, alas! as ignorant of the delicious flavor of moor-cocks, we might be all as happy and contented as the simple pastor of the mountain near the lake of Thun.

The man who confines his desires to his real wants, is more wise, more rich, and more contented, than any other mortal existing. The system upon which he acts is, like his soul, replete with simplicity and true greatness; and seeking his felicity in innocent obscurity and peaceful retirement, he devotes his mind to the love of truth, and finds his highest happiness in a contented heart.

A calm and tranquil life renders the indulgence of sensual pleasures less dangerous. The theater of sensuality exhibits scenes of waste and brutality, of noisy mirth and tumultuous riot; presents to observation pernicious goblets, overloaded tables, lascivious dancing, receptacles for disease, tombs with faded roses, and all the dismal haunts of pain. But to him who retires in detestation from such gross delights, the joys of sense are of a more elevated kind—soft, sublime, pure, permanent and tranquil.

Petrarch, one day inviting his friend, the Cardinal Colonna, to visit his retirement at Vaucluse, wrote to him, "If you prefer the tranquility of the country to the noise of the town, come here and enjoy yourself. Do not be alarmed at the simplicity of my table, or the hardness of my beds. Kings themselves are frequently disgusted by the luxury in which

they live, and sigh for comforts of a more homely kind. Change of scene is always pleasing; and pleasures, by occasional interruption, frequently become more lively. If, however, you should not accord with these sentiments, you may bring with you the most exquisite viands, the wines of Vesuvius, silver dishes, and every thing else that the indulgence of your senses requires. Leave the rest to me. I promise to provide you with a bed of the finest turf, a cooling shade, the music of the nightingales, figs, raisins, water drawn from the freshest springs; and, in short, every thing that the hand of Nature prepares for the lap of genuine pleasure."

Ah! who would not willingly renounce those things which only produce disquietude in the mind for those which render it contented! The art of occasionally diverting the imagination, taste and passions, affords new and unknown enjoyments to the mind, and confers pleasure without pain, and luxury without repentance. The senses, deadened by satiety, revive to new enjoyments. The lively twitter of the groves, and the murmer of the brooks, yield a more delicious pleasure to the ear than the music of the opera, or the compositions of the ablest masters. The eye reposes more agreeably on the concave firmament, on an expanse of waters, on mountains covered with rocks, than it does on all the glare of balls and assemblies. In short, the mind enjoys in solitude objects which were before insupportable, and reclining on the bosom of simplicity, easily renounces every vain delight. Petrarch wrote from Vaucluse to one of his friends, "I have made war against my corporeal powers, for I find they are my enemies. My eyes, which have rendered me guilty of so many follies, are now confined to the view of a single woman—old, black and sunburnt. If Helen or Lucretia had possessed such a face, Troy would never have been reduced to ashes, nor Tarquin driven from the empire of the world. But, to compensate these defects, she is faithful, submissive and industrious.

She passes whole days in the fields, her shriveled skin defying the hottest rays of the sun. My wardrobe still contains fine clothes, but I never wear them; and you would take me for a common laborer or a simple shepherd—I, who formerly was so anxious about my dress. But the reasons which then prevailed no longer exist; the fetters by which I was enslaved are broken; the eyes which I was anxious to please are shut; and if they were still open, they would not perhaps now be able to maintain the same empire over my heart."

Solitude, by stripping worldly objects of the false splendor in which fancy arrays them, dispels all vain ambition from the mind. Accustomed to rural delights, and indifferent to every other kind of pleasure, a wise man no longer thinks high offices and worldly advancement worthy of his desires. A noble Roman was overwhelmed with tears on being obliged to accept of the consulship, because it would deprive him for one year of the opportunity of cultivating his fields. Cincinnatus, who was called from the plow to the supreme command of the Roman legions, defeated the enemies of his country, added to it new provinces, made his triumphal entry into Rome, and at the expiration of sixteen days returned to his plow. It is true, that the inmate of an humble cottage, who is forced to earn his daily bread by labor, and the owner of a spacious mansion, for whom every luxury is provided, are not held in equal estimation by mankind. But let the man who has experienced both these situations be asked under which of them he felt the most content. The cares and inquietudes of the palace are innumerably greater than those of the cottage. In the former, discontent poisons every enjoyment; and its superfluity is only misery in disguise. The princes of Germany do not digest all the palatable poison which their cooks prepare, so well as a peasant digests his buckwheat pie. And those who may differ from me in this opinion, will be forced to acknowledge, that there is great

truth in the reply which a pretty French country girl made to a young nobleman, who solicited her to abandon her rustic taste, and retire with him to Paris, "Ah! my lord, the further we move from ourselves, the greater is our distance from happiness."

Solitude, by moderating the selfish desires of the heart, and expelling ambition from the breast, becomes a real asylum to the disappointed statesman or discarded minister; for it is not every public minister who can retire, like Necker, through the portals of everlasting fame. Every person, indeed, without distinction, ought to raise his grateful hands to heaven, on being dismissed from the troubles of public life, to the calm repose which the cultivation of his native fields and the care of his flocks and herds afford. In France, however, when a minister, who has incurred the displeasure of his sovereign, is ordered to *retire*, and thereby enabled to visit an estate which he has decorated in the highest style of rural elegance, this delightful retreat, alas! being considered a place of exile, becomes intolerable to his mind; he no longer fancies himself its master; is incapable of relishing its enchanting beauties; repose flies from his pillow; and, turning with aversion from every object, he dies at length the victim of spleen, petulence and dejection. But in England it is just the reverse. There a minister is congratulated on retiring, like a man who has happily escaped from a dangerous malady. He feels himself still surrounded by many friends much more worthy than his adherents while in power; for while those were bound to him by temporary considerations of interest, these are attached to him by real and permanent esteem. Thanks, generous Britons! for the examples you have given to us of men sufficiently bold and independent to weigh events in the scale of reason, and to guide themselves by the intrinsic and real merits of each case; for, notwithstanding the freedom with which many Englishmen have arraigned the dispensations of the Supreme

Being; notwithstanding the mockery and ridicule with which they have so frequently insulted virtue, good manners, and decorum; there are many more among them, who, especially at an advanced period of their lives, perfectly understand the art of living by themselves; and in their tranquil and delightful villas think with more dignity, and live with more real happiness, than the haughtiest noble in the zenith of his power.

Of the ministers who retire from the administration of public affairs, the majority finish their days in cultivating their gardens, in improving their estates, and, like the excellent de la Roche, at Spire, certainly possess more content with the shovel and the rake, than they enjoyed in the most prosperous hours in their administration.

It has, indeed, been said, that observations like these are common to persons who, ignorant of the manners of the world, and the characters of men, love to moralize on, and recommend a contempt of, human greatness; but that rural innocence, the pure and simple pleasures of nature, and an uninterrupted repose, are very seldom the companions of this boasted solitude. Those who maintain this opinion assert, that man, though surrounded with difficulties, and obliged to employ every art and cunning to attain his ends, feels with his success the pleasing power which attaches to the character of master, and fondly indulges in the exercise of sovereignty. Enabled to create and to destroy, to plant and to root up, to make alterations when and where he pleases, he may grub up a vineyard, and plant an English grove on its site; erect hills where hills never were seen; level eminences to the ground; compel the stream to flow as his inclination shall direct; force woods and shrubberies to grow where he pleases; graft or lop as it shall strike his fancy; open views and shut out boundaries; construct ruins where buildings never existed; erect temples of which he alone is the high priest; and build her-

mitages in which he may seclude himself at pleasure. It is said, however, that this is not a reward for the restraints he formerly experienced, but a natural inclination; for that a minister must be, from the habits of his life, fond of command and sovereignty, whether he continues at the head of an extensive empire, or directs the management of a poultry yard.

It would most undoubtedly discover a great ignorance of the world, and of the nature of man, to contend that it is necessary to renounce all the inclinations of the human heart, in order to enjoy the advantages of solitude. That which nature has implanted in the human breast must there remain. If, therefore, a minister, in his retirement, is not satiated with the exercise of power and authority, but still fondly wishes for command, let him require obedience from his chickens, provided such a gratification is essential to his happiness, and tends to suppress the desire of again exposing himself to those tempests and shipwrecks which he can only avoid in the safe harbor of rural life. An ex-minister must, sooner or later, learn to despise the appearances of human greatness, when he discovers that true greatness frequently begins at that period of life which statesmen are apt to consider a dreary void; that the regret of being no longer able to do more good, is only ambition in disguise; and that the inhabitants of the country, in cultivating their cabbages and potatoes, are a hundred times happier than the greatest minister.

Nothing contributes more to the advancement of earthly felicity, than a reliance on those maxims which teach us to *do as much good as possible,* and *to take things just as we find them;* for it is certainly true that no characters are so unhappy as those who are continually finding fault with every thing they see. My barber at Hanover, while he was preparing to shave me, exclaimed with a deep sigh, "*It is terribly hot today.*" "You place heaven," said I to him, "in great difficulties. For these nine months last past, you have regularly told

me every other day, *It is terribly cold to-day.*" Can not the Almighty, then, any longer govern the universe, without these gentlemen barbers finding something to be discontented with? "Is it not," I asked him, "much better to take the seasons as they change, and to receive with equal gratitude, from the hand of God, the winter's cold, and the summer's warmth?"—"O! certainly," replied the barber.

Competency and content, therefore, may in general be considered as the basis of earthly happiness; and solitude, in many instances, favors both the one and the other.

Solitude not only refines the enjoyments of friendship, but enables us to acquire friends from whom nothing can alienate our souls, and to whose arms we never fly in vain.

The friends of Petrarch sometimes apologized to him for their long absence. "It is impossible for us," said they, "to follow your example; the life you lead at Vaucluse is contrary to human nature. In winter you sit like an owl in the chimney corner. In summer you are running incessantly about the fields." Petrarch smiled at these observations. "These people," said he, "consider the pleasures of the world as the supreme good; and can not bear the idea of renouncing them. I have friends whose society is extremely agreeable to me; they are of all ages, and of every country. They have distinguished themselves both in the cabinet and in the field, and obtained high honors for their knowledge of the sciences. It is easy to gain access to them, for they are always at my service; and I admit them to my company, and dismiss them from it whenever I please. They are never troublesome, but immediately answer every question I ask them. Some relate to me the events of past ages, while others reveal to me the secrets of nature. Some teach me how to live; and others how to die. Some, by their vivacity, drive away my cares, and exhilarate my spirits; while others give fortitude to my mind, and teach me the important lesson how to restrain my desires,

and to depend on myself. They open to me, in short, the various avenues of all the arts and sciences; and upon their information I safely rely in all emergencies. In return for all these services, they only ask me to accommodate them with a convenient chamber in one corner of my humble habitation, where they may repose in peace; for these friends are more delighted with the tranquillity of retirement than with the tumults of society."

Love! the most precious gift of heaven,

"The cordial drop Heav'n in our cup has thrown,
To make the bitter load of life go down,"

appears to merit a distinguished rank among the advantages of solitude.

Love voluntarily unites itself with the aspect of beautiful nature. The view of a pleasing landscape makes the heart beat with the tenderest emotions. The lonely mountain and the silent grove increase the susceptibility of the female bosom, inspire the mind with rapturous enthusiasm, and, sooner or later, draw aside and subjugate the heart.

Women feel the pure and tranquil pleasures of rural life with a higher sensibility than men. They enjoy more exquisitely the beauties of a lonely walk, the freshness of a shady forest, and admire with higher ecstacy the charms of nature. Solitude is to them the school of true philosophy. In England, at least, where the face of the country is so beautiful, and where the taste of its inhabitants is hourly adding to it new establishments, the love of rural solitude is certainly stronger in the women than the men. A nobleman who employs the day in riding over his estates, or in following the hounds, does not enjoy the pleasures of rural life with the same delight as his lady, who devotes her time, in her romantic pleasure-grounds, to needle-work, or to the reading of some instructive, interesting work. In this happy country, indeed, where the people, in general, love the enjoyments of the

mind, the calm of rural retirement is doubly valuable, and its delight more exquisite. The learning which has of late years so considerably increased among the ladies of Germany, is certainly to be attributed to their love of retirement; for, among those who pass their time in the country, we find much more true wit and rational sentiment, than among the *beaux esprits* of the metropolis.

Minds, indeed, apparently insensible in the atmosphere of a metropolis, unfold themselves with rapture in the country. This is the reason why the return of spring fills every tender breast with love. "What can more resemble love," says a celebrated German philosopher, "than the feeling with which my soul is inspired at the sight of this magnificent valley, thus illuminated by the setting sun!" Rousseau felt an inexpressible delight on viewing the first appearance of spring; the earliest blossoms of that charming season gave new life and vigor to his mind; the tenderest dispositions of his heart were awakened and augmented by the soft verdure it presented to his eyes; and the charms of his mistress were assimilated with the beauties that surrounded him on every side. The view of an extensive and pleasing prospect softened his sorrows; and he breathed his sighs with exquisite delight amidst the rising flowers of his garden, and the rich fruits of his orchard.

Lovers constantly seek the rural grove to indulge, in the tranquility of retirement, the uninterrupted contemplation of the beloved object which forms the sole happiness of their lives. Of what importance to them are all the transactions of the world, or, indeed, any thing that does not tend to indulge the passion that fills their hearts? Silent groves, embowering glades, or the lonely borders of murmuring streams, where they may freely resign themselves to their fond reflections, are the only confidants of their souls. A lovely shepherdess, offering her fostering bosom to the infant she is nursing, while at

her side her well-beloved partner sits dividing with her his morsel of hard black bread, is a hundred times more happy than all the fops of the town; for love inspires his mind, in the highest degree, with all that is elevated, delightful and affecting in nature; and warms the coldest bosoms with the greatest sensibility and the highest rapture.

Love's softest images spring up anew in solitude. The remembrance of these emotions which the first blush of conscious tenderness, the first gentle pressure of the hand, the first dread of interruption, create, recurs incessantly! Time, it is said, extinguishes the flame of love; but solitude renews the fire, and calls forth those agents which lie long concealed, and only wait a favorable moment to display their powers. The whole course of youthful feeling again beams forth; and the mind—delicious recollection! fondly retracing the first affection of the heart, fills the bosom with an indelible sense of those high ecstacies which a connoisseur has said, with as much truth as energy, proclaim, for the first time, that happy discovery, that fortunate moment, when two lovers first perceive their mutual fondness.

Herder mentions a certain cast of people in Asia, whose mythology thus divided the felicities of eternity. "That men, after death, were, in the celestial regions, immediately the objects of female love during the course of a thousand years; first, by tender looks, then by a balmy kiss, and afterwards, by immediate alliance."

It was this noble and sublime species of affection that Wieland, in the warmest moments of impassioned youth felt for an amiable, sensible and beautiful lady of Zurich; for that extraordinary genius was perfectly satisfied that the metaphysical effects of love begin with the first sigh, and expire, to a certain degree, with the first kiss. I one day asked this young lady when it was that Wieland had saluted her for the first time? "Wieland," replied the amiable girl, "did not kiss my

hand for the first time until four years after our acquaintanc commenced."

Young persons in general, however, do not, like Wieland, adopt the mystic refinements of love. Yielding to the sentiments which the passion inspires, and less acquainted with its metaphysical nature, they feel at an earlier age, in the tranquillity of solitude, that irresistible impulse to the union of the sexes which the God of nature has so strongly implanted in the human breast.

A lady who resided in great retirement, at a romantic cottage upon the banks of the lake of Geneva, had three innocent and lovely daughters. The eldest was about fourteen years of age, the youngest was about nine, when they were presented with a tame bird, which hopped and flew about the chamber the whole day, and formed the sole amusement and pleasure of their lives. Placing themselves on their knees, they offered with unwearied delight, their little favorite pieces of biscuit from their fingers, and endeavored by every means, to induce him to, and nestle in, their bosoms; but the bird, the moment he had got the biscuit, with cunning coyness eluded their hopes and hopped away. The little favorite at length died. A year after this event, the youngest of the three sisters said to her mother, "O, I remember that dear little bird! I wish, mamma, you could procure me such a one to play with." "O! no," replied her elder sister, "I should like to have a little dog to play with better than any thing. I could catch a little dog, take him on my knee, hug him in my arms. A bird affords me no pleasure; he perches a little on my finger, then flies away, and there is no catching him again; but a little dog, oh! what pleasure * * "

I shall never forget the poor *religieuse* in whose apartment I found a breeding cage of canary birds, nor forgive myself for having burst into a fit of laughter at the discovery. It was, alas! the suggestion of nature; and who can resist what nature

suggests? This mystic wandering of religious minds, this celestial epilepsy of love, this premature effect of solitude, is only the fond application of natural inclination raised superior to all others.

Absence and tranquillity appear so favorable to the indulgence of this pleasing passion, that lovers frequently quit the beloved object, to reflect in solitude on her charms. Who does not recollect to have read, in the confessions of Rousseau, the story related by Madame de Luxemberg, of a lover who quitted the presence of his mistress, only that he might have the pleasure of writing to her. Rousseau replied to Madame de Luxemberg, that he wished he had been that man; and his wish was founded on a perfect knowledge of the passion; for who has ever been in love, and does not know that there are moments when the pen is capable of expressing the fine feelings of the heart with much greater effect than the voice, with its miserable organ of speech? The tongue, even in its happiest elocution, is never so persuasive as the speaking eyes, when lovers gaze with silent ecstacy on each other's charms.

Lovers not only express, but feel their passion with higher ecstacy and happiness in solitude than in any other situation. What fashionable lover ever painted his passion for a lovely mistress with such laconic tenderness and effect, as the village chorister of Hanover did on the death of a young and beautiful country girl with whom he was enamored, when, after erecting in the cemetery of the cathedral a sepulchral stone to her memory, he carved, in an artless manner, the figure of a blooming rose on its front, and inscribed beneath it these words—*C'est ainsi qu'elle fut.*

It was at the feet of those rocks which overhung the celebrated retreat at Vaucluse, that Petrarch composed his finest sonnets to deplore the absence or to complain of the cruelty of his beloved Laura. The Italians are of opinion, that when love inspired his muse, his poetry soared far beyond that of

any poet who ever wrote before or since his time, either in the Greek, the Latin, or the Tuscan languages. "Ah! how soft and tender is this language of the heart!" they exclaim. "Petrarch alone was acquainted with its power; he has added to the three graces a fourth—the grace of delicacy."

Love, however, when indulged in rural solitude, or amidst the romantic scenery of an ancient castle, and, assisted by the ardent imagination of impetuous youth, frequently assumes a more bold and violent character. Religious enthusiasm, blended with a saturnine disposition, forms, in effervescent minds, a sublime and extraordinary compound of the feelings of the heart. A youthful lover of this description, when deprived of the smiles of his mistress, takes his first declaration of love from the text of the apocalypse, and thinks his passion an eternal melancholy; but when he is inclined to sharpen the dart within his breast, his inspired mind views in the beloved object, the fairest model of divine perfection.

The lovers of this romantic cast, placed in some ancient solitary castle, soar far beyond the common tribe, and, as their ideas refine, their passions become proportionably sublime. Surrounded by stupendous rocks, and impressed by the awful stillness of the scene, the beloved youth is considered not merely as an amiable and virtuous man, but as a god. The inspired mind of the fond female fancies her bosom to be the sanctuary of love, and conceives her affection for the youthful idol of her heart to be an emanation from heaven; a ray of the Divine Presence. Ordinary lovers, without doubt, in spite of absence, unite their souls, write by every post, seize all occasions to converse with, or hear from, each other; but our more sublime and exalted female introduces into her romance of passion every butterfly she meets with, and all the feathered songsters of the groves; and, except in the object of her love, no longer sees any thing as it really is. Reason and sense no longer guide; the refinements of love direct all

her movements; she tears the world from its poles, and the sun from its axis; and to prove that all she does is right, establishes for herself and her lover a new gospel, and a new system of morality.

A lover, separated, perhaps forever, from a mistress who has made the most important sacrifices to his happiness; who was his only consolation in affliction, his only comfort in calamity; whose kindness supported his sinking fortitude; who remained his faithful and his only friend in dire adversity and domestic sorrow; seeks, as his whole resource, a slothful solitude. Nights passed in sleepless agonies; a distaste of life, a desire of death, an abhorrence of all society, and a love of dreary seclusion, drive him, day after day, wandering, as chance may direct, through the most solitary retirements, far from the hated traces of mankind. Were he, however, to wander from the Elbe to the lake of Geneva; were to seek relief in the frozen confines of the north, or the burning regions of the west, to the utmost extremities of the earth or seas, he would still be like the hind described by Virgil:

"Stung with the stroke and madding with the pain,
She wildly flies from wood to wood in vain;
Shoots o'er the Cretan lawn with many a bound,
The cleaving dart still rankling in the wound."

Petrarch, on returning to Vaucluse, felt with new and increasing stings the passion which perturbed his breast. Immediately on his arrival at this sequestered spot, the image of his beloved Laura incessantly haunted his imagination. He beheld her at all times, in every place, and under a thousand different forms. "Three times in the middle of the night, when every door was closed, she appeared to me," says he, "at the feet of my bed, with a steadfast look, as if confident of the power of her charms. Fear spread a chilling dew over all my limbs. My blood thrilled through my veins toward my heart. If any one had then entered my apartment with

a candle, he would have beheld me as pale as death, with every mark of terror on my face. Rising before the break of day, with trembling limbs from my disordered bed, and hastily leaving my house, where every thing created alarm, I climbed to the summit of the rocks, and ran wildly through the woods, casting my eyes incessantly on every side, to see if the form which had haunted my repose, still pursued me. Alas! I could find no asylum. Places the most sequestered, where I fondly flattered myself that I should be alone, presented her continually to my mind, and I beheld her sometimes issuing from the hollow trunk of a tree, from the concealed source of a spring, or from the dark cavity of a broken rock. Fear rendered me insensible, and I neither knew what I did, nor where I went."

The heart of Petrarch was frequently stimulated by ideas of voluptuous pleasure, even among the rocks of Vaucluse, where he sought an asylum from love and Laura. He soon, however, banished sensuality from his mind, and, by refining his passion, acquired that vivacity and heavenly purity which breathe in every line of those immortal lyrics he composed among the rocks. But the city of Avignon, in which the object thus tenderly beloved resided, was not sufficiently distant from the place of his retreat, and he visited it too frequently. A passion, indeed, like that which Petrarch felt, leaves the bosom, even when uncorrupted, totally incapable of tranquillity. It is a violent fever of the soul, which inflicts upon the body a complication of painful disorders. Let lovers, therefore, while they possess some control over the passion which fills their breasts, seat themselves on the borders of a river, and reflect that love, like the stream, sometimes precipitates itself with violence down the rocks; and sometimes flowing with soft tranquillity along the plain, meanders through meadows, and loses itself beneath the peaceful shades of solitary bowers.

The tranquillity of solitude, however, may, to a mind disposed to resign itself with humility to all the dispensations of heaven, be found not disadvantageous to the perturbations of love. A lover whom death has bereaved of the dear object of his affection, seeks only those places which his favorite inhabited; considers every other as desert and forlorn; and expects that death alone is able to stop the torrent of his tears. Such an indulgence of sorrow, however, can not be called a resignation to the will of God. A lover of this description is attached solely to the irrecoverable object of his increasing sorrows. His distracted mind fondly hopes that she may still return; he thinks he hears her soft enchanting voice in every breeze; he sees her lovely form approaching, and opens his expecting arms to clasp her once again to his still throbbing breast. But he finds, alas! his hopes are vain; the fancy-breathing form eludes his grasp, and convinces him that the delightful vision was only the light and love-formed phantom of his sorrow-sickened mind. A sad remembrance of her departed spirit is the only comfort of his lingering life; he flies to the tomb where her mortal remains were deposited, plants roses round her shrine, waters them with his tears, cultivates them with the tenderest care, kisses them as emblems of her blushing cheeks, and tastes, with sighing transports, their balmy fragrance as the fancied odor of her ruby lips.

It must afford infinite pleasure to every philosophic mind, to reflect on the victory which the virtuous Petrarch gained over the passion that assailed his heart. During his retreat into Italy from love and Laura, his friends in France used every endeavor to induce him to return. One of them wrote to him:—"What dæmon possesses you?—How could you quit a country in which you indulged all the propensities of youth, and where the graceful figure which you formerly adorned with so much care, procured you such unbounded

admiration?—How can you live thus exiled from Laura, whom you love with so much tenderness, and whose heart is so deeply afflicted by your absence?"

Petrarch replied: "Your anxiety is vain; I am resolved to continue where I am. I ride here safely at anchor; and all the hurricanes of eloquence shall never drive me from it. How then can you expect to persuade me to change this resolution, merely by placing before my eyes the deviations of my youth, which I ought to forget; by describing an illicit passion which left me no other resource than a precipitate flight; and by extolling the meretricious advantages of a handsome person, which too long occupied my attention. These are follies I must no longer think of. I am now rapidly approaching toward the last goal on the course of life. Objects more serious and important now occupy my thoughts. God forbid, that, listening to your flattering observations, I should again throw myself into the snares of love, again put on a yoke which so severely galled me!—The natural levity of youth apologizes, in some degree, for the indiscretions it creates; but I should despise myself, if I could now be tempted to revisit either the bower of love, or the theater of ambition. Your suggestions, however, have produced a proper effect; for I consider them as the oblique censures of a friend upon my past misconduct. The solicitudes of the gay and busy world no longer disturb my mind; for my heart has tenaciously rooted all its fibers in this delightful solitude, where I rove at large, free and unconstrained, without inquietude or care. In summer I repose upon the verdant turf beneath the shade of some embowering tree, or saunter along the enameled borders of a cool refreshing stream. At the approach of autumn, I seek the woods, and join the muses' train. This mode of life is surely preferable to a life at court, where nothing but disgusting jealousies and corroding cares exist. I have now, in short, no wish, except that, when death relieves me both from pleasure and

from pain, I may recline my head upon the bosom of a friend, whose eyes, while he performs the last office of closing mine, will drop a deploring tear upon my departing spirit, and convey my remains with friendly care, to a decent tomb in my native country."

These were the sentiments of *the philosopher;* but, after a short interval *the man* returned once again to the city of Avignon, and only visited his retreat at Vaucluse occasionally.

Petrarch, however, by these continued endeavors to subdue the violence of his passion, acquired a sublimity and richness of imagination which distinguished his character, and gave him an ascendency over the age in which he lived, greater than any of the literati have since attained. To use the expression of the poet, he was capable of passing, with the happiest facility,

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"

and was enabled, as occasion required, to conceive the boldest enterprises, and to execute them with the most heroic courage. He who languished, sighed and even wept with unmanly softness, at the feet of his mistress, breathing only the tender and affectionate language of gentle love, no sooner turned his thoughts toward the transactions of Rome, than he assumed a higher tone, and not only wrote, but acted with all the strength and spirit of the Augustan age. Monarchs have relinquished the calls of hunger, and the charms of rest, to indulge the tender luxuries his love-lorn muse afforded. But at a more advanced age he was no longer a sighing minstrel, chanting amorous verses to a relentless fair; he was no longer an effeminate slave, that kissed the chains of an imperious mistress, who treated him with disdain; he became a zealous republican, who spread by his writings the spirit of liberty throughout Italy, and sounded a loud alarm against tyranny and tyrants. Great as a statesman, profound and judicious as a public

minister, he was consulted in the most important political transactions of Europe, and frequently employed in the most arduous and difficult negotiations. Zealously active in the cause of humanity, he anxiously endeavored, on occasions, to extinguish the torch of discord. The greatest princes, conscious of his extraordinary genius, solicited his company, and endeavored, by listening to his precepts, to learn the noble art of rendering their countries respectable, and their people happy.

These traits of Petrarch's character clearly evince that, oppressed as he was by the passion of love, he derived great advantages from solitude. The retirement at Vaucluse was not, as is commonly imagined, a pretense to be nearer the person of Laura, for Laura resided altogether at Avignon; but a means of avoiding the frown of his mistress, and flying from the contagion of a corrupt court. Seated in his little garden, which was situated at the foot of a lofty mountain, and surrounded by a rapid stream, his soul rose superior to the adversities of his fate. His disposition, indeed, was naturally restless and unquiet; but in his tranquil moments, a sound judgment, joined to an exquisite sensibility, enabled him to enjoy the delights of solitude with singular advantage; and to find in his retreat at Vaucluse the temple of peace, the residence of calm repose, and a safe harbor against all the tempests of the soul.

The flame of love, therefore, although it can not be entirely extinguished, may be greatly purified and refined by solitude. Man, indeed, ought not to extirpate the passions which the God of nature has planted in the human heart, but to direct them to their proper ends.

To avoid such miseries as Petrarch endured, the pleasures of retirement should be shared with some amiable female, who, better than the cold precepts of philosophy, will beguile or banish, by the charms of conversation, all the cares and torments of life.

It has been said by a very sensible author, that the presence of one thinking being like ourselves, whose bosom glows with sympathy, and whose affection we possess, so far from destroying the advantages of solitude, renders them more favorable. If, like me, you owe your happiness to the fond attention of a wife, you will soon be induced by her kindness, by her tender and unreserved communication of every sentiment of her mind, every feeling of her heart, to forget the society of the world; and your happiness will be as pleasingly diversified as the employments and vicissitudes of your lives.

The orator who speaks so eloquently must have felt with exquisite sensibility the pleasures he describes: "Here," says he, "every kind expression is remembered; the emotions of one heart correspond with those of the other; every thought is treasured up; every testimony of affection is returned; the happy pair enjoy in each other's company all the pleasures of the mind; and there is no felicity which does not communicate itself to their hearts. To beings thus united by the sincerest affection and the closest friendship, every thing that is said or done, every wish and every event, becomes mutually important. No jealous fears, no envious stings, disturb their happiness; faults are pointed out with cautious tenderness and good nature; looks bespeak the inclinations of the soul; every wish and every desire is anticipated; every view and intention assimilated; and, the sentiments of one conforming to those of the other, each rejoices with cordiality at the smallest advantage which the other acquires.

Thus it is that the solitude which we share with an amiable object, produces tranquillity, satisfaction and heartfelt joy; and makes the humblest cottage a dwelling place of the purest pleasure.

Love, in the shades of retirement, while the mind and the heart are in harmony with each other, inspires the noblest sentiments; raises the understanding to the highest sphere of

intellect; fills the bosom with increased benevolence; destroys all the seeds of vice, and meliorates and extends all the virtues. By its delightful influence the attack of ill-humor is resisted; the violence of our passions, abated; the bitter cup of human affliction, sweetened; all the injuries of the world, alleviated; and the sweetest flowers plentifully strewed along the thorny paths of life. Every unhappy sufferer, whether the malady be of the body or the mind, derives from this source extraordinary comfort and consolation. At a time, alas! when every thing displeased me, when every object was disgusting, when my sufferings had destroyed all the energy and vigor of my soul, when grief had shut from streaming eyes the beauties of nature, and rendered the whole universe a dreary tomb, the kind attentions of a wife were capable of conveying a secret charm, a silent consolation to my mind. O! nothing can render the bowers of retirement so serene and comfortable, or can so sweetly soften all our woes, as a conviction that woman is not indifferent to our fate.

Solitude, it is true, will not completely heal every wound which this imperious passion is capable of inflicting on the human heart; but it teaches us to endure our pains without wishing for relief, and enables us to convert them into soft sorrow and plaintive grief.

Both sexes in early youth, but particularly females from fifteen to eighteen years of age, who possess high sensibilities, and lively imaginations, generally feel, during the solitude of rural retirement, a soft and pleasing melancholy, when their bosoms begin to heave with the first propensities of love. They wander every where in search of a beloved object, and sigh for one alone, long before the heart is fixed in its affection, or the mind conscious of its latent inclination. I have frequently observed this disposition unaccompanied by any symptom of ill-health. It is an original malady. Rousseau felt its influence at Vevay, upon the borders of the lake

of Geneva. "My heart," says he, "rushed with ardor from my bosom into a thousand innocent felicities; and melting into tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child. How frequently, stopping to indulge my feelings, and seating myself on a piece of broken rock, did I amuse myself with seeing my tears drop into the stream!"

Retirement, however, is not equally favorable to every species of affliction. Some bosoms are so exquisitely alive to the sense of misfortune, that the indelible remembrance of the object of their affection preys upon their minds; the reading of a single line written by the hand they loved, freezes their blood; the very sight of the tomb which has swallowed up the remains of all their soul held dear, is intolerable to their eyes. On such beings, alas! the heavens smile in vain; to them the new-born flowers and the twittering groves, proclaiming the approach of spring, and the regeneration of vegetable nature, bring no charms; the garden's variegated hues irritate their feelings; and the silent retreats, from which they once expected consolation, only increase their pains. Such refined and exquisite feelings, the offspring of warm and generous passions, are real misfortunes; and the malady they engender requires to be treated with the mildest attention and the tenderest care.

But to minds of softer temper, solitude possesses many powerful charms, although the losses they deplore are equally great. Such characters feel, indeed, a sense of their misfortune in its utmost possible extent, but they soften its acuteness by yielding to the natural mildness of their dispositions; they plant upon the fatal tomb the weeping-willow and the ephemeral rose; they erect *mausolea;* compose funeral dirges; and render the very emblems of death the means of consolation. Their hearts are continually occupied by the idea of those whom their eyes deplore; and they exist under the sensations of the truest and most sincere sorrow, in a kind

of middle state between earth and heaven. This species of sorrow is of the happiest kind. Far be it from me to suppose it in the least degree affected. But I call such characters happy mourners; because, from the very frame and texture of their constitutions, grief does not destroy the energy of their minds, but permits them to find consolation in those things which, to minds differently constructed, would create aversion. They feel a heavenly joy in pursuing employments which preserve the memory of those who are the subjects of their sorrow.

Solitude will enable the heart to vanquish the most painful sense of adversity, provided the mind will generously lend its aid, and fix its attention to a different object. If men think there is any misfortune from which they have no other resource than despair or death, they deceive themselves; for despair is no resource. Let such men retire to their studies, and there seriously trace out a series of important and settled truths, and their tears will no longer fall; but the weight of misfortunes will grow light, and sorrow fly from their breasts.

Solitude, by encouraging the enjoyments of the heart, by promoting domestic felicity, and by creating a taste for rural scenery, subdues impatience, and drives away ill-humor. Impatience is a stifled anger, which men silently manifest by looks and gestures, and weak minds ordinarily reveal by a shower of complaints. A grumbler is never further from his proper sphere than when he is in company; solitude is his only asylum. Ill-humor is an uneasy and insupportable condition, which the soul frequently falls into when soured by a number of those petty vexations which we daily experience in every step of our progress through life; but we need only to shut the door against improper and disagreeable intrusions, to avoid this scourge of happiness.

Vexations, indeed, of every kind, are much sooner quieted in the silence of retirement than in the noise of the world. A cheerful disposition, a placid temper, and well regulated

passions, will prevent worldly vexations from interrupting our happiness. By these attainments, the deepest melancholy, and most settled uneasiness of life, have been frequently banished from the heart. It is true, that the progress in this case is much more rapid in women than in men. The mind of a lively female flies immediately to happiness, while that of a melancholy man still creeps on with pain; the yielding bosoms of the fair are easily elevated or depressed. These effects, it is true, may be produced by means less abstracted than solitude; by anything that strikes the senses, and penetrates the heart. Men, on the contrary, augment the disease, and fix it more firmly in the bosom, by brooding over its cause and consequences, and are obliged to apply the most efficacious remedies, with unshaken constancy, to effect a cure; for feeble prescriptions are, in such cases, of no avail. The only chance, indeed, of success, is by exerting every endeavor to place the body under the regimen of the mind. Vigorous minds frequently banish the most inveterate evils, or form a powerful shield against all the darts of fate, and, by braving every danger, drive away those feelings by which others are irritated and destroyed; they boldly turn their eyes from what things are, to what they ought to be; and with determined resolution support the bodies they are designed to animate; while weak minds surrender every thing committed to their care.

The soul, however, always follows what is most agreeable to its ruling passion. Worldly men generally delight in gaming, feasting and debauchery; while those who are fond of solitude feel, from a consciousness of its advantages, no enjoyments equal to those its peaceful shades afford.

I now conclude my reflections upon the advantages of Solitude to *the Heart*. May they give greater currency to useful sentiments, to consolatory truths, and contribute in some degree to diffuse the enjoyment of a happiness which is so much within our reach.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GENERAL ADVANTAGES OF RETIREMENT.

RETIREMENT engages the affections of men whenever it holds up a picture of tranquillity to their view.

The doleful and monotonous sound of the clock of a sequestered monastery, the silence of nature in a still night, the pure air on the summit of a high mountain, the thick darkness of an aged forest, the sight of a temple fallen into ruins, inspire the soul with a soft melancholy, and banish all recollection of the world and its concerns.

The man who can not hold a friendly correspondence with his own heart; who derives no comfort from the reflections of his mind; who dreads the idea of meditation, and is fearful of passing a single moment with himself, looks with equal dread on solitude and on death. He endeavors to enjoy all the voluptuousness which the world affords; drains the pernicious cup of pleasure to its dregs; and, until the dreadful moment approaches when he beholds his nerves shattered, and all the powers of his soul destroyed, has not the courage to make the delayed confession, "I am tired of the world and all its idle follies!"

The legions of fantastic fashions, to which a man of pleasure is obliged to sacrifice his time, impair the rational faculties of his mind, and destroy the native energies of his soul. Forced continually to lend himself to the performance of a thousand little trifles, a thousand mean absurdities, he becomes by habit frivolous and absurd. The face of things no longer wears its true and genuine aspect; and his depraved taste loses all relish

for rational entertainment, or substantial pleasure. The infatuation seizes on his brain, and his corrupted heart teems with idle fancies and vain imaginations.

The inevitable consequences of this ardent pursuit of entertainments and diversions, are languor and dissatisfaction. He has drained the cup of pleasure to the last drop, who is at length obliged to confess that all his hopes are fled; who finds disappointment and disgust mingled with every enjoyment; who feels astonished at his own insensibility, and who no longer possesses the magic of the enchantress, imagination, to gild and decorate the scene, calls in vain to his assistance the daughters of sensuality and intemperance: their caresses can no longer delight his dark and melancholy mind; the soft and syren song of luxury no longer can dispel the cloud of discontent that hovers round his head.

Behold that debilitated, weak old man running after pleasures he can no longer enjoy. The airs of gayety which he affects render him ridiculous; his attempts to shine expose him to derision; his endeavors to display the wit and eloquence of youth, betray him into the garrulity of old age. His conversation, filled with repetition and tiresome narrative, creates disgust, and only forces the smile of pity from the lips of his youthful rivals. To the eye of wisdom, however, who observed him through all the former periods of his life, sparkling in the noisy circles of extravagance and vice, his character always appeared the same.

The wise man, in the midst of the most tumultuous pleasures, frequently retires within himself, and silently compares what he might do with what he is doing. Surrounded by, and even when accidentally engaged in, the excesses of intoxication, he associates only with those warm and generous souls whose highly elevated minds are drawn toward each other by the most virtuous inclinations and sublime sentiments. The silent retreat of the mind within itself, has more than once

given birth to enterprises of the greatest importance and utility; and it is not difficult to imagine, that some of the most celebrated actions of mankind were first inspired among the sounds of music, or conceived amidst the mazes of the dance. Sensible and elevated minds never commune more closely with themselves than in those places of public resort in which the low and vulgar, surrendering themselves to illusion and caprice, become incapable of reflection, and blindly suffer themselves to be overwhelmed by the surrounding torrent of folly and distraction.

The unceasing pursuit of sensual enjoyment is merely a mean used by the votaries of worldly pleasure, of flying from themselves; they seize with avidity upon any object that promises to occupy the present hour agreeably, and provide entertainment for the day that is passing over their head. To such characters, the man who can invent hour after hour new schemes of pleasure and open day after day fresh sources of amusement, is a valuable companion indeed; he is their best, their only friend. Are then these lazy and luxurious votaries of sensual pleasures destitute of those abilities which might prevent this sacrifice of time, and, if properly exerted, afford them relief? Certainly not. But, having been continually led from object to object in the pursuit of pleasure, the assistance of others has habitually become the first want and greatest necessity of their lives; they have insensibly lost all power of acting for themselves, and depend, for every object they see, for every sensation they feel, for every sentiment they entertain, on those by whom they are attended. This is the reason why the rich, who are seldom acquainted with any other pleasure than those of sense, are, in general, the most miserable of mankind.

The nobility and courtiers of France think their enjoyments appear vain and ridiculous only to those who have not the opportunity of partaking in them; but I am of a different

opinion. Returning one Sunday from Trianon to Versailles, I perceived at a distance a number of people assembled upon the terrace of the castle: and, on a nearer approach, I beheld Louis XV, surrounded by his court, at the windows of his palace. A man very richly dressed, with a large pair of branching antlers fastened upon his head, whom they called the stag, was pursued by a dozen others who composed the pack. The pursued and the pursuers leaped into the great canal, scrambled out again, and ran wildly round and round, amidst the acclamations of the assembly, who loudly clapped their hands to testify their delight, and to encourage the diversion. "What can all this mean?" said I to a French gentleman who stood near me. "Sir," he replied, with a very serious countenance, "it is for the entertainment of the court." The most obscure and indigent individuals may certainly be much happier than these masters of mankind with their melancholy slaves and miserable entertainments.

Direful condition! Is there then no occupation whatsoever, no useful employment, no rational recreation sufficiently high and dignified for such characters? Are they reduced to the melancholy condition of not being able to perform one good and virtuous action during the intervals of suspended pleasure? Can they render no services to friendship, to their country, to themselves? are there no poor and miserable beings, to whose bosoms they might afford charitable comfort and relief? It is, in short, impossible for such characters in any way to improve themselves in wisdom or in virtue?

The powers of the human mind are of greater extent than is generally imagined. He who, either from taste or necessity, exercises them frequently, soon finds, that the highest felicities of which our nature is capable, reside entirely within ourselves. The wants of life are, for the greater part, merely artificial; and although sensual objects contribute most efficaciously to our happiness and delight, it is not because they

are indispensably necessary for this purpose, but because they have been rendered desirable by habit; and, from the pleasures they produce, we flatter ourselves that they are absolutely necessary to our felicity. If, however, we had fortitude to resist their charms, and courage to seek our happiness in ourselves, we should frequently find in our own bosoms a greater variety of resources than all the objects of sense are capable of affording.

Amusement, indeed, may sometimes be found in those places to which the sexes resort merely to see and to be seen. The eye may be occasionally gratified by the sight of objects really agreeable; the ear may listen to observations truly flattering. Lively thoughts and sensible remarks now and then prevail. Characters equally amiable and interesting occasionally mix among the group. We may form acquaintances with men of distinguished merit, whom we should not otherwise have had an opportunity of knowing; and meet with women of amiable qualities and irreproachable conduct, whose refined conversation ravishes the ear with a delight equal to that with which their exquisite beauty captivates the heart. But by what a number of painful sensations must the chance of perceiving these pleasures be purchased! Those whom reason or disgust restrain from mixing in the idle dissipations of life, can not see, without a sigh, the gay conceit, the airy confidence, the blind arrogance, and the bold loquacity, with which these votaries of worldly pleasure proclaim a felicity which is almost invariably deceitful; nor observe without a sigh, the extravagant joy of so many great men and the absurd airs of so many gray-headed children.

Honor, fame and pleasure are conceived to accompany an invitation to the board of luxury; although disease, with leaden scepter, is known to preside; and reproach and calumny are indiscriminately cast upon the purest characters. But he who feels the least energy of mind, turns with aversion from all

society which tends to weaken its effect; and finds the simplest fare, enjoyed with freedom and content amidst a happy and affectionate family, ten thousand times more agreeable than the rarest dainty and the richest wine, with a society where he must sit ceremoniously silent in compliment to some reputed wit, from whose lips nothing but absurdities and nonsense proceed.

The spiritless and crowded societies of the world, where a round of low and trifling amusements fills the hour of entertainment, and where to display a pomp of dress and levity of manners is the only ambition, may afford some pleasure to those light and empty minds who are impatient of the weight of idleness; but the wise man, who occasionally resorts to them in search of rational conversation or temporary amusement, and only finds a dull unvaried jargon, and a tiresome round of compliments, will turn with aversion from these temples of false delight, and exclaim, in the language of the poet:

"I envy none their pageantry and show,
I envy none the gilding of their woe.
Give me, indulgent gods! with mind serene,
And guiltless heart, to range the sylvan scene;
No splendid poverty, no smiling care,
No well-bred hate or servile grandeur there:
The pleasing objects useful thoughts suggest;
The sense is ravish'd and the soul is blest:
On every thorn, delightful wisdom grows,
In every rill a sweet instruction flows."

The social pleasure is founded on unlimited confidence, on an affectionate and reciprocal interchange of sentiment and opinions. A tender, faithful, refined and rational friendship, renders the pleasures of the world spiritless and disgusting. How joyful do we disencumber ourselves from the shackles of society, for that close and sublime intercourse in which our inclinations are free, our feelings generous, our sentiments

unbiased; where a mutuality of thought and action, of pleasures and of pains, uninterruptedly prevail; where the gentle hand of love conducts us along the paths of truth and virtue; where every thought is anticipated before it escapes from the lips; where advice, consolation, succor, are reciprocally given and received in all the accidents and in all the misfortunes of life! The soul, touched by the charms of friendship, springs from its apathy and dejection, and views the enlivening beam of hope awakening it to activity. The happy pair, casting a retrospective glance on the time passed, mutually exclaim with the tenderest emotions, "O, the delights that we have already experienced;—O, the joys that we have already felt!" If the tear of affliction steal down the cheek of the one, the other with affection wipes it tenderly away. The sorrows of one are felt with equal sensibility by the other; and what sorrow will not an intercourse of hearts so closely and affectionately united, entirely subdue! Day after day they communicate to each other all they have seen, all they have heard, all that they feel, and every thing that they know. Time flies before them on his swiftest pinions. They are never tired of each other's company and conversation. The only misfortune they fear, the greatest indeed they can possibly experience, is the misfortune of being separated by occasional absence or untimely death.

But human happiness is continually exposed to interruption. At the very moment, alas! when we vainly think ourselves the most secure, fate, by a sudden blow, strikes its unhappy victim even in our arms. All the pleasure of life then seems forever extinguished, every object alarms our mind, and every place seems desert and forlorn. In vain are our arms extended to embrace our loved, though lost, companion; in vain do we invoke her return. Her well-known step still seems to beat upon the listening ear, and promise her approach; but suspended sense returns, and the delusive sounds are heard no more. A

death-like silence reigns around, and involves us in the shades of dreary solitude, unconscious of every thing but our bleeding hearts. Wearied and dejected, we imagine ourselves no longer capable of loving or of being beloved; and life without love, to the heart that has once felt its pleasures, is more terrible than death. So sudden a transition from the highest happiness to the deepest misery, overpowers the mind. No kind friend appears to assuage our sufferings, or seems capable of forming an adequate idea of our distress. The pangs, indeed, which such a loss inflicts, can not be conceived, unless they have been felt. The only consolaion of the unhappy sufferer is to live in solitude, and his only wish to die alone. But it is under circumstances like these that solitude enjoys its greatest triumph, and the afflicted sufferer receives the greatest benefits; for there is no sorrow, however great, no pang, however powerful, that it will not, when wisely indulged, at first soften, and at length subdue. The remedy which solitude "administers to a mind diseased," is slow and gradual; for the art of living alone requires much experience, is subject to so many casualties, and depends so materially upon the temperment of the patient, that it is necessary we should attain a complete maturity before any great advantages can be derived from it. But he who is able to throw off the galling yoke of prejudice, and possesses a natural esteem and fondness for retirement, will not be embarrassed as to the choice he ought to make under such circumstances. Indifferent to external objects, and averse from the dissipations of the world, he will rely on the powers of his mind, and will never be less alone than when he is in the company of himself.

Men of genius are frequently condemned to employments as disagreeable to the turn and temper of their minds, as the most nauseous medicine must be to an empty stomach. Confined to toil on a dry and disgusting subject, fixed to a particular spot, and harrassed by subordinate duties, they relinquish

all expectation of tranquillity on this side the grave. Deprived of enjoying the common pleasures of nature, every object increases their disgust. "It is not for us," they exclaim, "that the youthful zephyrs call forth the budding foliage with their caressing breath; that the feathered choir chant in enlivening strains their rural songs; that the verdant meadows are decked with fragrant flowers." But set these complainants free, give them liberty and leisure to think for themselves, and the enthusiasm of their minds will soon regenerate, and soar into the highest regions of intellectual happiness, with the bold wing and penetrating eye of the bird of Jove.

If solitude be capable of dissipating the afflictions of persons thus circumstanced, what may not be expected from its influence on those who are enabled to retire, at pleasure, to its friendly shades, and who have no other wish than to enjoy pure air and domestic felicity! When Antisthenes was asked what advantages philosophy had afforded him, he answered: "*It has taught me to subdue myself.*" Pope says, he never laid his head upon his pillow, without acknowledging that the most important lesson of life is to learn the art of being happy within ourselves. And it seems to me that we shall all find what Pope looked for, when home is our content, and every thing about us, even to the dog and the cat, partakes of our affection.

Health is certainly essential to happiness, and yet there are circumstances and situations, under which the privation of it may be attended with tranquillity.

How frequently have I returned thanks to God, when indisposition has prevented me from going abroad, and enabled me to recruit my weakened powers in solitude and silence! Obliged to drag through the streets of the metropolis day after day during a number of years, feeble in constitution, weak in limbs; susceptible on feeling the smallest cold, to the same sensation as if knives were separating the flesh from the bone; continually surrounded, in the course of my

profession, with the most afflicting sorrows; it is not surprising that I should thank the Almighty with tears of gratitude, on experiencing even the relief which a confinement by indisposition procured. A physician, if he possesses sensibility, must, in his anxiety to relieve the sufferings of others, frequently forget his own. But, alas! how frequently must he feel all the horrors of his situation, when he is summoned to attend patients whose maladies are beyond the reach of medicine. Under such circumstances, the indisposition which excuses my attendance, and leaves me the powers of thought, affords me comparatively a sweet repose; and, provided I am not disturbed by the polite interruptions of ceremonious visiters, I enjoy a pleasing solitude. One single day passed undisturbed at home in literary leisure, affords to the mind more real pleasure than all the circles of fashionable entertainment are able to bestow.

The fear of being alone is no longer felt either by the young or old, whenever the mind has acquired the power of employing itself in some useful or agreeable study. Ill humor may be banished by adopting a regular course of reading. Books, indeed, can not be inspected without producing a beneficial effect, provided we always read with a pen or pencil in our hand and note down the new ideas that may occur, or the observations which confirm the knowledge we before possessed; for reading becomes not only useless, but fatiguing, unless we apply the information it affords either to our own characters, or to those of other men. This habit, however, may be easily acquired; and then books become one of the most safe and certain antidotes to lassitude and discontent. By this means a man becomes his own companion, and finds his best and most cheerful friend in his own heart.

Pleasures of this kind certainly surpass in a great degree all those which result merely from the indulgence of the

senses. The pleasures of the mind, generally speaking, signify sublime meditation, the profound deductions of reason, and the brilliant effusions of the imagination; but there are also others, for the perfect enjoyment of which neither extensive knowledge nor extraordinary talents are necessary. Such are the pleasures which result from active labor; pleasures equally within the reach of the ignorant and learned, and not less exquisite than those which result from the mind. Manual exertions, therefore, ought never to be despised. I am acquainted with gentlemen who understand the mechanism of their watches, who are able to work as painters, locksmiths, carpenters, and who are not only possessed of the tools and implements of every trade, but know how to use them. Such men never feel the least disquietude from the want of society, and are in general the happiest characters in existence.

Mental pleasures are within the reach of all persons who, free, tranquil and affectionate, are contented with themselves, and at peace with their fellow-creatures. The mind contemplates the pranks of school, the sprightly aberrations of our boyish days, the wanton stories of early youth, our plays and pastimes, and all the little hopes and fears of infancy, with fond delight. O! with what approving smiles and soft regret, the aged cast their eyes upon those happy times when youthful inclination prompted all their actions, when every enterprise was undertaken with lively vigor, and executed with undaunted courage; when difficulties were sought merely for the purpose of surmounting them! Let us compare what we were formerly with what we are at present; or rather, by giving our thoughts a freer range, reflect on the various events we have experienced or observed; upon the means that the Almighty employs to raise or sink the prosperity of empires; upon the rapid progress made, even in our time, in every art and science; upon the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the destruction of dangerous prejudices; upon the empire which

barbarism and superstition have gained, notwithstanding the exertions of genius and reason to prevent them; upon the sublime power of the human mind and its inefficient productions; and languor will instantly disappear, and tranquillity, peace and good humor prevail.

Thus, advantage may in solitude be attained and relished at every period of our lives; at the most advanced age, as well as during the vigor of youth. He who to an unbroken constitution joins a free and contented mind, and assiduously cultivates the power of his understanding, will, if his heart be innocent, at all times enjoy the purest and most unalterable pleasures. Employment animates all the functions of the soul, and calls forth their highest energies. It is the secret consciousness which every person of a lively imagination possesses, of the powers of the mind, and the dignity they are capable of attaining, that creates the noble anxiety and ardor, which carry their efforts to the sublimest hights. But if, either by duty or situation, we maintain too close an intercourse with society, if we are obliged, in spite of inclination, to submit to frivolous and fatiguing dissipations, it is only by quitting the tumult, and entering into silent meditation, that we feel that effervescence, that desire to break from bondage, to fly from past errors, and avoid in future every noisy and tumultuous pleasure.

The mind never feels with more energy and satisfaction that it lives, that it is rational, great, active, free and immortal, than during those moments in which it excludes idle and impertinent intruders.

Of all the vexations of life, there are none so insupportable, as those insipid visits, those annoying partialities, which occupy the time of frivolous and fashionable characters. "My thoughts," says Rousseau, "will only come when they please, and not when I choose;" and, therefore, the intrusions of strangers; or of mere acquaintances, were always extremely

odious to him. It was for this reason alone that this extraordinary character, who seldom experienced an hour of tranquillity, felt such indignation against the importunate civilities and empty compliments of common conversation, whilst he enjoyed the rational intercourse of sensible and well-informed minds with the highest delight. How frequently are the brightest beams of intellect obscured by associating with low and little minds! How frequently do the soundest understandings become frivolous, by keeping frivolous company! For, although these bright beams are immediate emanations from the Deity on the mind of man, they must be matured by meditation and reflection, before they can give elevation to genius, and consistency to character.

Virtues to which the mind can not rise even when assisted by the most advantageous intercourse, are frequently the fruits of solitude. Deprived forever of the company and conversation of those whom we love and esteem, we endeavor to charm the uneasy void by every effort in our power; but while love and friendship lead us by the hand, and cherish us by their care, we lean incessantly on their bosoms and remain inert. Solitude, were it for this reason alone, is indispensably necessary to the human character; for when men are enabled to depend on themselves alone, the soul, tossed about by the tempest of life, acquires new vigor; learns to bear with constancy, or avoid with address, those dangerous rocks on which vulgar minds are inevitably wrecked; and discovers continually new resources, by which the mind resists, with stoic courage, the rigors of its fate.

Weak minds always conceive it most safe to adopt the sentiments of the multitude. They never venture to express an opinion upon any subject until the majority have decided; and blindly follow the sentiments of the many, whether upon men or things, without troubling themselves to inquire who are right, or on which side truth preponderates. A love of

equity and truth, indeed, is seldom found, except in those who have no dread of solitude. Men of dissipation never protect the weak, or avenge the oppressed. If the various and powerful hosts of knaves and fools are your enemies; if you have been injured in your property by injustice, or traduced in your fame by calumny, you must not fly for protection and redress to men of light and dissipated characters; for they are merely the organs of error, and the conduit pipes of prejudice.

The knowledge of ourselves is in solitude more easily and effectually acquired than in any other situation; for we there live in habits of the strictest intimacy with our own bosoms. It is certainly possible for men to be deliberate and wise even amidst all the tumultuous folly of the world, especially if their principles be well fixed before they enter on the stage of life; but integrity is undoubtedly more easily preserved in the innocent simplicity of solitude, than in the corrupted intercourses of society. In the world how many men please only by their vices! How many profligate villians and unprincipled adventurers, of insinuating manners, are well received only because they have learned the art of administering to the follies, the weaknesses, and the vices of others! The mind, intoxicated with the fumes of that incense which artful flattery is continually offering to it, is rendered incapable of justly appreciating the characters of men. On the contrary, we truly discover in the silence of solitude the inward complexion of the heart; and learn not only what the characters of men are, but what in truth and nature they ought to be.

How many new and useful discoveries may be made by occasionally forcing ourselves from the vortex of the world, and retiring to the calm enjoyments of study and reflection! To accomplish this end, it is only necessary to commence seriously with our hearts, and to examine our actions with

impartiality. The worldly-minded man, indeed, has reason to avoid this self-examination, for the result would in all probability be painful to his feelings; as he who only judges of himself by the flattering opinions which others may have expressed of his character, will, in such a scrutiny, behold with surprise that he is the miserable slave of habit and public opinion; submitting himself with scrupulous exactness, and the best possible grace, to the tyranny of fashion and established ceremony; never venturing to oppose their influence, however ridiculous and absurd it may be; and obsequiously following the example of others, without daring to resist pursuits which every one seems so highly to approve. He will perceive, that almost all his thoughts and actions are engendered by a base fear of himself, or arise from a servile complaisance to others; that he only seeks to flatter the vanities, and indulge the caprices of his superiors, and becomes the contemptible minister of these men, without daring to offer them the smallest contradiction, or hazard an opinion that is likely to give them the least displeasure. Whoever, with calm consideration, views this terrifying picture, will feel, in the silent emotions of his heart, the necessity of occasionally retiring into solitude, and seeking society with men of nobler sentiments and purer principles.

Let every one, therefore, who wishes to think with dignity, or live with ease, seek the retreats of solitude, and enter into a friendly intercourse with his own heart. How small a portion of true philosophy with an enlightened understanding, will render it humble and compliant! But in the mists of prejudice, dazzled by the intellectual glimmer of false lights, every one mistakes the true path, and seeks for happiness in the shades of darkness, and in the labyrinths of obscurity. The habits of retirement and tranquillity can alone enable us to make a just estimate of men and things, and it is by renouncing all the prepossessions which the corruptions of

society have implanted in the mind, that we make the first advances toward the restoration of reason, and the attainment of felicity.

We have hitherto only pointed out one class of the general advantages which may be derived from rational solitude, but there are many others which apply still more closely to men's business and bosoms. Who, alas! is there that has not experienced its comforting influence in the keenest adversities of life? Who is there that does not seek relief from its friendly shades in the languors of convalesence, in the pangs of affliction, and even in that distressful moment when death deprives us of those whose company was the charm and solace of our lives? Happy are they who know the advantages of a religious retirement, of that holy rest in which the virtues rivet themselves more closely to the soul, and in which every man, when he is on the bed of death, devoutly wishes he had lived.

But these advantages become more conspicuous, when we compare the manner of thinking which employs the mind of a solitary philosopher, with that of a worldly sensualist; the tiresome, tumultuous life of the one with the ease and tranquillity of the other; the horrors which disturb the death-bed of vice, with the calm sigh which accompanies the expiring soul of virtue. This is the awful moment in which we feel how important it is to commune morally with ourselves, and religiously with our Creator; to enable us to bear the sufferings of life with dignity, and the pains of death with ease.

The sick, the sorrowful, and the discontented, may find equal relief in solitude; it administers a balm to their tortured souls, heals the deep and painful wounds they have received, and in time restores them to their pristine health and vigor. The deceitful shrine in which the intoxication of sensuality involved health and happiness disappears, and they behold, in the place of imaginary joys, those objects only which afford real pleasure.

Prosperity arrays every object in the most glowing and delightful colors; but to adversity every thing appears black and dismal. Nor are the errors of these contrary extremes discovered until the moment when the curtain drops, and dissipates the illusion; the deceitful dream continues until the imagination is silenced. The unhappy then perceive that the Almighty was watching over them, even when they conceived themselves entirely abandoned; the happy then discover the vanity of those pleasures and amusements to which they surrendered themselves so implicitly during the intoxication of the world, and reflect seriously upon their misconduct; upon their present state and future destiny; and upon the modes most likely to conduct them to true felicity. How miserable should we be, were the Divine Providence to grant us every thing we desire! At the very instant when we conceive all the happiness of our lives annihilated, God, perhaps, is performing something extraordinary in our favor. Certain it is, that patience and perseverance will, in solitude, convert the deepest sorrow into tranquillity and joy. Those objects which, at a distance, appear menacing, lose, on a nearer approach, their disagreeable aspect, and, in the event, frequently produce the most agreeable pleasures. He who tries every expedient, who boldly opposes himself to every difficulty, who steadily resists every obstacle, who neglects no exertion within his power, and relies with confidence on the assistance of God, extracts from affliction both its poison and its sting, and deprives misfortune of its victory.

Sorrow, misfortune and sickness, soon render solitude easy and familiar to our minds. How willingly do we renounce the world, and become indifferent to all its pleasures, when the insidious eloquence of the passions is silenced, and our powers are debilitated by vexation or ill health! It is then we perceive the weakness of those succors which the world affords. How many useful truths, alas! has the bed of sickness and sorrow

instilled even into the minds of kings and princes; truths which, in the hour of health, they would have been unable to learn amidst the deceitful counsels of their pretended friends. The time, indeed, in which a valetudinarian is capable of employing his powers with facility and success, in a manner conformable to his designs, is short, and runs rapidly away. Those only who enjoy robust health can exclaim, "Time is my own;" for he who labors under continual sickness and suffering, and whose avocations depend on the public necessity or caprice, can never say that he has one moment to himself. He must watch the fleeting hours as they pass, and seize an interval of leisure when and where he can. Necessity, as well as reason, convinces him that he must, in spite of his daily sufferings, his wearied body, or his harassed mind, firmly resist his accumulating troubles; and, if he would save himself from becoming the victim of dejection, he must manfully combat the difficulties by which he is attacked. The more we enervate ourselves, the more we become the prey of ill-health; but determined courage, and obstinate resistance, frequently renovate our powers; and he who, in the calm of solitude, vigorously wrestles with misfortune, is, in the event, sure of gaining the victory.

The influence of the mind upon the body is a consolatory truth to those who are subject to constitutional complaints. Supported by this reflection, the efforts of reason continue unsubdued; the influence of religion maintains its empire; and the lamentable truth, that men of the finest sensibility, and most cultivated understanding, frequently possess less fortitude under affliction than the most vulgar of mankind, remains unknown. Campanella, incredible as it may seem, suffered by the indulgence of melancholy reflections, a species of mental torture more painful than any bodily torture could have produced. I can, however, from my own experience, assert, that, even in the extremity of distress, every object which diverts the attention, softens the evils we endure, and

frequently drives them entirely away. By diverting the attention, many celebrated philosophers have been able not only to preserve a tranquil mind in the midst of the most poignant sufferings, but have even increased the strength of their intellectual faculties, in spite of their corporeal pains. Rousseau composed the greater part of his immortal works under the continual pressure of sickness and sorrow. Gellert, who, by his mild, agreeable and instructive writings, has become the preceptor of Germany, certainly found, in this interesting occupation, the secret remedy against melancholy. Mendelsohm, at an age far advanced in life, and not in general subject to dejection, was for a long time oppressed by an almost inconceivable derangement of the nervous system; but, by submitting with patience and docility to his sufferings, he still maintains all the noble and high advantages of youth. Garve, who was for several years unable to read, to write, or even to think, has since produced his treatise upon Cicero, in which this profound writer, so circumspect in all his expressions, that he appears hurt if any improper word escapes his pen, thanks the Almighty, with a sort of rapture, for the weakness of his constitution, because it had taught him the extraordinary influence which the powers of the mind have over those of the body.

Solitude is not merely desirable, but absolutely necessary, to those characters who possess sensibilities too quick, and imaginations too ardent, to live quietly in the world, and who are incessantly inveighing against men and things. Those who suffer their minds to be subdued by circumstances which would scarcely produce an emotion in other bosoms; who complain of the severity of their misfortunes on occasions which others would not feel; who are dispirited by every occurrence which does not produce immediate satisfaction and pleasure; who are incessantly tormented by the illusion of fancy; who are unhinged and dejected the moment prosperity is out of

their view; who repine at what they possess, from an ignorance of what they really want; whose minds are forever veering from one vain wish to another; who are alarmed at every thing, and enjoy nothing; are not formed for society, and, if solitude have no power to heal their wounded spirits, are certainly incurable.

Men who in other respects possess rational minds and pious dispositions, frequently fall into low spirits and despair; but it is in general almost entirely their own fault. If it proceed, as is generally the case, from unfounded fears; if they love to torment themselves and others on every trivial disappointment or slight indisposition; if they constantly resort to medicine for that relief which reason alone can bestow; if they fondly indulge, instead of repressing, these idle fancies; if, after having endured the most excruciating pains with patience, and supported the greatest misfortunes with fortitude, they neither can nor will learn to bear the puncture of the smallest pin, or those trifling adversities to which human life is unavoidably subject; they can only attribute their unhappy condition to their own misconduct; and, although they might, by no very irksome effort of their understandings, look with an eye of composure and tranquillity on the multiplied and fatal fires issuing from the dreadful cannon's mouth, will continue shamefully subdued by the idle apprehensions of being fired at by pop-guns.

All these qualities of the soul, fortitude, firmness and stoic inflexibility, are much sooner acquired by silent meditation than amidst the noisy intercourse of mankind, where innumerable difficulties continually oppose us; where ceremony, servility, flattery and fear, contaminate our dispositions; where every occurrence opposes our endeavors; and where, for this reason, men of the weakest minds, and the most contracted notions, become more active and popular, gain more attention, and are better received, than men of feeling hearts and liberal understandings.

The mind, in short, fortifies itself with impregnable strength in the bowers of solitary retirement against every species of suffering and affliction. The frivolous attachments which, in the world, divert the soul from its proper objects, and drive it wandering, as chance may direct, into an eccentric void, die away. Contented, from experience, with the little which nature requires, rejecting every superfluous desire, and having acquired a complete knowledge of ourselves, the visitations of the Almighty, when he chastises us with affliction, humbles our presumptuous pride, disappoints our vain conceits, restrains the violence of our passions, and makes us sensible of our inanity and weakness, are received with composure and felt without surprise. How many important truths do we here learn, of which the worldly-minded man has no idea! Casting the eye of calm reflection on ourselves, and on the objects around us, how resigned we become to the lot of humanity! How different every object appears! The heart expands to every noble sentiment; the bloom of conscious virtue brightens on the cheek; the mind teems with sublime conceptions; and, boldly taking the right path, we at length reach the bowers of innocence, and the plains of peace.

On the death of a beloved friend, we constantly feel a strong desire to withdraw from society; but our worldly acquaintances unite in general to destroy this laudable inclination. Conceiving it improper to mention the subject of our grief, our companions, cold and indifferent to the event, surround us, and think their duties sufficiently discharged by paying the tributary visit, and amusing us with the current topics of the town. Such idle pleasantries can not convey a balm of comfort into the wounded heart.

When I, alas! within two years after my arrival in Germany, lost the lovely idol of my heart, the amiable companion of my former days, I exclaimed a thousand times to my surrounding friends, *O! leave me to myself!* Her departed

spirit still hovers around me; the tender recollection of her society, the afflicting remembrance of her sufferings on my account, are always present to my mind. What mildness and affability! Her death was as calm and resigned as her life was pure and virtuous. During five long months the lingering pangs of dissolution hung continually around her. One day as she reclined upon her pillow, while I read to her "*The Death of Christ*," by Rammler, she cast her eyes over the page, and silently pointed out to me the following passage: "My breath grows weak, my days are shortened, my heart is full of affliction, and my soul prepares to take its flight." Alas! when I recall all those circumstances to my mind, and recollect how impossible it was for me to abandon the world at that moment of anguish and distress, when I carried the seeds of death within my bosom; when I had neither fortitude to bear my afflictions, nor courage to resist them, while I was yet pursued by malice, and traduced by calumny; I can easily conceive, in such a situation, that my exclamation might be, *Leave me to myself!* To a heart thus torn by too rigorous a destiny from the bosom that was opened for its reception; from a bosom in which it fondly dwelt; from an object that it dearly loved, detached from every object, at a loss where to fix its affections or communicate its feelings, solitude alone can administer comfort.

Solitude, when it has ripened and preserved the tender and humane feelings of the heart, and created in the mind a salutary distrust of our vain reason and boasted abilities, may be considered to have brought us nearer to God. Humility is the first lesson we learn from reflection, and self-distrust the first proof we give of having obtained a knowledge of ourselves. When, in attending the duties of my profession, I behold, on the bed of sickness, the efforts of the soul to oppose its impending dissolution, and discover, by the increasing torments of the patient, the rapid advances of death;

when I see the unhappy sufferer extend his cold and trembling hands to thank the Almighty for the smallest mitigation of his pains; when I hear his utterance choked by intermingled groans, and view the tender looks, the silent anguish of his attending friends; all my fortitude abandons me; my heart bleeds; and I tear myself from the sorrowful scene, only to pour my tears more freely over the lamentable lot of humanity, to regret the inefficacy of those medical powers which I am supposed only to have sought with so much anxiety, as a means of prolonging my own miserable existence.

> "When in this vale of years I backward look,
> And miss such numbers, numbers too of such,
> Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
> And stricter on their guard, and fitter far
> To play life's subtle game, I scarce believe
> I still survive: and am I fond of life
> Who scarce can think it possible I live?
> Alive by miracle! If I am still alive,
> Who long have buried what gives life to live."

The wisdom that teaches us to avoid the snares of the world, is not to be acquired by the incessant pursuit of entertainments; by flying, without reflection, from one party to another; by continual conversation on low and trifling subjects; by undertaking every thing and doing nothing. "He who would acquire true wisdom," says a celebrated philosopher, "must learn to live in solitude." An uninterrupted course of dissipation stifles every virtuous sentiment. The dominion of reason is lost amidst the intoxications of pleasure; its voice is no longer heard; its authority is no longer obeyed; the mind no longer strives to surmount temptations; but, instead of shunning the perils which the passions scatter in our way, we run eagerly to find them. The idea of God, and the precepts of his holy religion, are never so little remembered as in the ordinary intercourses of society.

Engaged in a multiplicity of absurd pursuits, entranced in the delirium of gayety, inflamed by the continual ebriety which raises the passions and stimulates the desires, every connection between God and man is dissolved; the bright and noble faculty of reason obscured; and even the great and important duties of religion, the only scource of true felicity, totally obliterated from the mind, or remembered only with levity and indifference. On the contrary, he who, entering into a serious self-examination, elevates his thoughts in silence toward his God; who consults the theater of nature, the spangled firmament of heaven, the meadows enameled with flowers, the stupendous mountains, and the silent groves, as the temples of the Divinity; who directs the emotions of his heart to the great Author and Conductor of every thing; who has his enlightened providence continually before his eyes, must, most assuredly, have already lived in pious solitude and religious retirement.

The pious disposition which a zealous devotion to God engenders in solitude, may, it is true, in certain characters and under particular circumstances, degenerate into the gloom of superstition, or rise in the phrenzy of fanaticism; but these excesses soon abate; and compared with that fatal supineness which extinguishes every virtue, are really advantageous. The sophistry of the passions is silent during the serious hours of self-examination, and the perturbations we feel on the discovery of our errors and defects, are converted by the light of a pure and rational faith, into happy ease and perfect tranquillity. The fanatic enthusiast presents himself before the Almighty much oftener than the supercilious wit who derides a holy religion, and calls piety a weakness. Philosophy and morality become in solitude the handmaids of religion, and join their powers to conduct us into the bowers of eternal peace. They teach us to examine our hearts, and exhort us to guard against the dangers of fanaticism. But if virtue can not be instilled

into the soul without convulsive efforts, they also admonish us not to be intimidated by the apprehension of danger. It is not in the moment of joy, when we turn our eyes from God and our thoughts from eternity, that we experience those salutary fervors of the soul, which even religion, with all her powers, can not produce so soon as a mental affliction or a corporeal malady. The celebrated M. Garve, one of the greatest philosophers of Germany, exclaimed to Dr. Spalding and myself, "I am indebted to my malady for having led me to make a closer scrutiny and more accurate observation on my own character."

In the last moments of life, it is certain that we all wish we had passed our days in greater privacy and solitude, in stricter intimacy with ourselves, and in closer communion with God. Pressed by the recollection of our errors, we then clearly perceive that they were occasioned by not having shunned the snares of the world, and by not having watched with sufficient care over the inclinations of our hearts. Oppose the sentiments of a solitary man, who has passed his life in pious conference with God, to those which occupy a worldly mind, forgetful of its Creator, and sacrificing its dearest interests to the enjoyment of the moment; compare the character of a wise man, who reflects in silence on the importance of eternity, with that of a fashionable being, who consumes all his time at ridottos, balls and assemblies; and we shall then perceive that solitude, dignified retirement, select friendship, and rational society, can alone afford true pleasure, and give us what all the vain enjoyments of the world will never bestow, consolation in death, and hope of everlasting life. But the bed of death discovers most clearly the difference between the just man, who has quietly passed his days in religious contemplation, and the man of the world, whose thoughts have only been employed to feed his passions and gratify his desires. A life passed amidst the tumultuous dissipations of the world, even when unsullied

by the commission of any positive crime, concludes, alas! very differently from that which has been spent in the bowers of solitude, adorned by innocence, and rewarded by virtue.

But, as example teaches more effectually than precept, and curiosity is more alive to recent facts than remote illustrations, I shall here relate the history of a man of family and fashion, who a few years since shot himself in London; from which it will appear, that men possessed even of the best feelings of the heart, may be rendered extremely miserable, by suffering their principles to be corrupted by the practice of the world.

The honorable Mr. Damer, the eldest son of Lord Milton, was five-and-thirty years of age when he put a period to his existence by means perfectly correspondent to the principles in which he had lived. He was married to a rich lady, the daughter-in-law of General Conway. Nature had endowed him with extraordinary talents; but a most infatuated fondness for excessive dissipation obscured the brightest faculties of his mind, and perverted many of the excellent qualities of the heart. His houses, his carriages, his horses, and his liveries, surpassed in splendor and magnificence every thing sumptuous and costly even in the superb and extravagant metropolis of Great Britain. The fortune he possessed was great; but the variety of lavish expenditures in which he engaged exceeded his income, and he was at length reduced to the necessity of borrowing money. He raised, in different ways, near forty thousand pounds, the greater part of which he employed with improvident generosity, in relieving the distresses of his less opulent companions; for his heart overflowed with tenderness and compassion; but this exquisite sensibility, which was ever alive to the misfortunes of others, was at length awakened to his own embarrassed situation; and his mind driven by the seeming irretrievable condition of his affairs, to the utmost verge of despair. Retiring to a common brothel, he sent for four women of the town, and passed several hours in

their company with apparent good spirits and unencumbered gayety; but, when the dead of night arrived, he requested of them, with visible dejection, to retire; and immediately afterward drawing from his pocket, a pistol, which he had carried about him the whole afternoon, blew out his brains. It appeared that he had passed the evening with these women in the same manner as he had been used to pass many others with different women of the same description, without demanding favors which they would most willingly have granted, and only desiring, in return for the money he lavished on them, the dissipation of their discourse, or at most, the ceremony of a salute, to divert the sorrow that preyed upon his tortured mind. But the gratitude he felt for the temporary oblivion which these intercourses afforded, sometimes ripened into feelings of the warmest friendship. A celebrated actress of the London Theater, whose *conversations* had already drained him of considerable sums of money, requested of him, only three days before his death, to send her five-and-twenty guineas. At that moment he had only ten guineas about him; but he sent her, with an apology for his inability to comply immediately with her request, all he had, and soon after borrowed the remainder of the money, and sent it to her without delay. This unhappy young man, shortly before the fatal catastrophe, had written to his father, and disclosed to him the distressed situation he was in; and the very night on which he terminated his existence, his affectionate parent, the good Lord Milton, arrived in London, for the purpose of discharging all the debts, and arranging the affairs of his unhappy son. Thus lived and died this destitute and dissipated man!—How different from that life which the innocent live, or that death which the virtuous die!

I hope I may be permitted in this place to relate the story of a young lady whose memory I am extremely anxious to preserve; for I can with great truth say of her, as Petrarch

said of his beloved Laura, "The world was unacquainted with the excellence of her character; for she was only known to those whom she has left behind to bewail her loss." Solitude was all the world she knew; for her only pleasures were those which a retired and virtuous life afford. Submitting with pious resignation to the dispensations of heaven, her weak frame sustained, with steady fortitude, every affliction of mortality. Mild, good and tender, she endured her sufferings without a murmur or sigh; and although naturally timid and reserved, disclosed the feelings of her soul with all the warmth of filial enthusiasm. Of this description was the superior character of whom I now write; a character who convinced me, by her fortitude under the severest misfortunes, how much strength solitude is capable of conveying to the mind even of the feeblest being. Diffident of her own powers, she listened to the precepts of a fond parent, and relied with perfect confidence on the goodness of God. Taught by my experience, submitting to my judgment, she entertained for me the most ardent affection; and convinced me, not by professions, but by actions, of her sincerity. Willingly would I have sacrificed my life to have saved her; and I am satisfied that she would as willingly have given up her own for me. I had no pleasure but in pleasing her, and my endeavors for that purpose were most gratefully returned. A rose was my favorite flower, and she presented one to me almost daily during the season. I received it from her hand with the highest delight, and cherished it as the richest treasure. A malady of almost a singular kind, a hemorrhage in the lungs, suddenly deprived me of the comfort of this beloved child, and tore her from my protecting arms. From the knowledge I had of her constitution, I immediately perceived that the disorder was mortal. How frequently during that fatal day did my wounded, bleeding heart, bend me on my knees before God to supplicate for her recovery. But I

concealed my feelings from her observation. Although sensible of her danger, she never discovered the least apprehension of its approach. Smiles played around her pallid cheeks whenever I entered or quitted the room; and when worn down by the fatal distemper, a prey to the most corroding grief, a victim to the sharpest and most intolerable pains, she made no complaint, but mildly answered all my questions by some short sentence, without entering into any detail. Her decay and impending dissolution became obvious to the eye; but to the last moment of her life, her countenance preserved a serenity correspondent to the purity of her mind, and the affectionate tenderness of her heart. Thus I beheld my dear and only daughter, at the age of five-and-twenty, after a lingering suffering of nine long, long months, expire in my arms. So long and so severe an attack was not necessary to the conquest: she had been the submissive victim of ill health from her earliest infancy; her appetite was almost gone when we left Swisserland; a residence which she quitted with her usual sweetness of temper, and without discovering the smallest regret; although a young man, as handsome in his person as he was amiable in the qualities of his mind, the object of her first, her only affection, a few weeks afterward put a period to his existence. During the few happy days we passed at Hanover, where she rendered herself universally respected and beloved, she amused herself by composing religious prayers, which were afterward found among her papers, and in which she implores death to afford her a speedy relief from her pains. During the same period she wrote also many letters, always affecting, and frequently sublime. They were couched in expressions of the same desire speedily to re-unite her soul with the Author of her days. The last words that my dear, my beloved child uttered, amidst the most painful agonies, were these, "To-day I shall taste the joys of heaven!"

How unworthy of this bright example should we be, if, after having seen the severest sufferings sustained by a female in the earliest period of life, and of the weakest constitution, we permitted our minds to be dejected by misfortunes which courage might enable us to surmount! A female who under the anguish of inexpressible torments, never permitted a sigh or complaint to escape from her lips, but submitted with silent resignation to the will of heaven, in hope of meeting with reward hereafter. She was ever active, invariably mild, and always compassionate to the miseries of others. But *we*, who have before our eyes the sublime instructions which a character thus virtuous and noble has here given us; *we*, who like her, aspire to a seat in the mansions of the blessed, refuse the smallest sacrifice, make no endeavor to stem with courage the torrent of adversity, or to acquire that degree of patience and resignation, which a strict examination of our own hearts, and silent communion with God, would certainly afford.

Sensible and unfortunate beings! The slight misfortunes by which you are now oppressed, and driven to despair (for slight, indeed, they are, when compared with mine), will ultimately raise your minds above the low considerations of the world, and give a strength to your power which you now conceive to be impossible. You now think yourselves sunk into the deepest abyss of suffering and sorrow; but the time will soon arrive when you will perceive yourselves in that happy state in which the mind verges from earth, and fixes its attention on heaven. You will then enjoy a calm repose, be susceptible of pleasures equally substantial and sublime, and possess, in lieu of tumultuous anxieties for life, the serene and comfortable hope of immortality. Blessed, supremely blessed, is he who knows the value of retirement and tranquillity, who is capable of enjoying the silence of the groves, and all the pleasures of rural solitude. The soul then tastes celestial delight even

under the deepest impressions of sorrow and dejection; regains its strength, collects new courage, and acts with perfect freedom. The eye then looks with fortitude on the transient sufferings of disease; the mind no longer feels a dread of being alone; and we learn to cultivate, during the remainder of our lives, a bed of roses round even the tomb of death.

CHAPTER V.

ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE IN EXILE.

THE advantages of solitude are not confined to rank, or fortune, or to circumstances. Fragrant breezes, magnificent forests, richly tinted meadows, and that endless variety of beautiful objects which the birth of spring spreads over the face of nature, enchant not only philosophers, kings and heroes, but ravish the mind of the meanest spectator with exquisite delight. An English author has very justly observed, that "it is not necessary that he who looks with pleasure on the color of a flower, should study the principles of vegetation; or that the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems should be compared, before the light of the sun can gladden, or its warmth invigorate. Novelty in itself is a source of gratification; and Milton justly observes, that to him who has been long pent up in cities, no rural object can be presented which will not delight or refresh some of his senses."

Exiles themselves frequently experience the advantages and enjoyments of solitude. Instead of the world from which they are banished, they form in the tranquillity of retirement, a new world for themselves; forget the false joys and fictitious pleasures which they followed in the zenith of greatness, habituate their minds to others of a nobler kind, more worthy the attention of rational beings; and to pass their days with tranquillity, invent a variety of innocent felicities, which are only thought of at a distance from society, far removed from all consolation, far from their country, their families, and their friends.

But exiles, if they wish to insure happiness in retirement,

must, like other men, fix their minds upon some one object and adopt the pursuit of it in such a way as to revive their buried hopes, or to excite the prospect of approaching pleasure.

Maurice, Prince of Isenbourg, distinguished himself by his courage during a service of twenty years under Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, and Marshal Broglio, and in the war between the Russians and the Turks. Health and repose were sacrificed to the gratification of his ambition and love of glory. During his service in the Russian army, he fell under the displeasure of the empress, and was sent into exile. The calamitous condition to which persons exiled by this government are reduced is well known; but this philosophic prince contrived to render even a Russian banishment agreeable. While oppressed both in body and in mind by the painful reflections which his situation at first created, and reduced by his anxieties to a mere skeleton, he accidentally met with the little essay written by Lord Bolingbroke on the subject of Exile. He read it several times, and, "in proportion to the number of times I read," said the prince, in the preface to the elegant and nervous translation he made of this work, "I felt all my sorrows and disquietudes vanish."

This essay by Lord Bolingbroke upon Exile, is a masterpiece of stoic philosophy and fine writing. He there boldly examines all the adversities of life. "Let us," says he, "set all our past and present afflictions at once before our eyes: let us resolve to overcome them, instead of flying from them, or wearing out the sense of them with long and ignominious patience. Instead of palliating remedies, let us use the incision knife and the caustic, search the wound to the bottom, and work an immediate and radical cure.

Perpetual banishment, like uninterrupted solitude, certainly strengthens the powers of the mind, and enables the sufferer to collect sufficient force to support his misfortunes. Solitude, indeed, becomes an easy situation to those exiles who are

inclined to indulge the pleasing sympathies ot the heart; for they then experience pleasures that were before unknown, and from that moment forget those they tasted in the more flourishing and prosperous conditions of life.

Brutus, when he visited the banished Marcellus in his retreat at Mitylene, found him enjoying the highest felicities of which human nature is susceptible, and devoting his time, as before his banishment, to the study of every useful science. Deeply impressed by the example this unexpected scene afforded, he felt, on his return, that it was Brutus, who was exiled, and not Marcellus, whom he left behind. Quintus Metellus Numidius had experienced the like fate a few years before. While the Roman people, under the guidance of Marius, were laying the foundation of that tyranny which Cæsar afterward completed, Metellus, singly, in the midst of an alarmed senate, and surrounded by an enraged populace, refused to take the oath imposed by the pernicious laws of the tribune Saturnius; and his intrepid conduct was converted, by the voice of faction, into a high crime against the state; for which he was dragged from his senatorial seat by the licentious rabble, exposed to the indignity of a public impeachment, and sentenced to perpetual exile. The more virtuous citizens, however, took arms in his defense, and generously resolved rather to perish than behold their country unjustly deprived of so much merit; but this magnanimous Roman, whom no persuasion could induce to do wrong, declined to increase the confusion of the commonwealth by encouraging resistance, conceiving it a duty he owed to the laws, not to suffer any sedition to take place on his account. Contenting himself with protesting his innocence, and sincerely lamenting the public phrenzy, he exclaimed, as Plato had done before during the distraction of the Athenian commonwealth, "If the times should mend, I shall recover my station; if not, it is a happiness to be absent from Rome;" and departed without regret

into exile, fully convinced of its advantages to a mind incapable of finding repose except on foreign shores, and which at Rome must have been incessantly tortured by the hourly sight of a sickly state and an expiring republic.

Rutilius also, feeling the same contempt for the sentiments and manners of the age, voluntarily withdrew himself from the corrupted metropolis of the republic. Asia had been defended by his integrity and courage against the ruinous and oppressive extortion of the publicans. These noble and spirited exertions, which he was prompted to make not only from his high sense of justice, but in the honorable discharge of the particular duties of his office, drew on him the indignation of the equestrian order, and excited the animosity of the faction which supported the interests of Marius. They induced the vile and infamous Apicius to become the instrument of his destruction. He was accused of corruption; and, as the authors and abettors of this false accusation sat as judges on his trial, Rutilius, the most innocent and virtuous citizen of the republic, was of course condemned; for, indeed, he scarcely condescended to defend the cause. Seeking an asylum in the east, this truly respectable Roman, whose merits were not only overlooked, but traduced, by his ungrateful country, was every where received with profound veneration and unqualified applause. He had, however, before the term of his exile expired, an opportunity of exhibiting the just contempt he felt for the treatment he had received; for when Sylla earnestly solicited him to return to Rome, he not only refused to comply with his request, but removed his residence to a greater distance from his infatuated country.

Cicero, however, who possessed in an eminent degree all the resources and sentiments which are necessary to render solitude pleasant and advantageous, is a memorable exception to these instances of happy and contented exiles. This eloquent patriot, who had been publicly proclaimed. "*the savior of his country,*"

who had pursued his measures with undaunted perseverance, in defiance of the open menaces of a desperate faction, and the concealed daggers of hired assassins, sunk into dejection and dismay under a sentence of exile. The strength of his constitution had long been impaired by incessant anxiety and fatigue; and the terrors of banishment so oppressed his mind, that he lost all his powers, and became, from the deep melancholy into which it plunged him, totally incapable of adopting just sentiments, or pursuing spirited measures. By this weak and unmanly conduct he disgraced an event by which Providence intended to render his glory complete. Undetermined where to go, or what to do, he lamented, with effeminate sighs and childish tears, that he could now no longer enjoy the luxuries of his fortune, the splendor of his rank, or the charms of his popularity. Weeping over the ruins of his magnificent mansion, which Clodius leveled with the ground, and groaning for the absence of his wife, Terentia, whom he soon afterward repudiated, he suffered the deepest melancholy to seize upon his mind; became a prey to the most inveterate grief; complained with bitter anguish of wants, which, if supplied, would have afforded him no enjoyment; and acted, in short, so ridiculously, that both his friends and his enemies concluded that adversity had deranged his mind. Cæsar beheld with secret and malignant pleasure, the man who had refused to act as his lieutenant, suffering under the scourge of Clodius. Pompey hoped that all sense of *his* ingratitude would be effaced by the contempt and derision to which a benefactor, whom he had shamefully abandoned, thus meanly exposed his character. Atticus himself, whose mind was bent on magnificence and money, and who, by his temporizing talents, endeavored to preserve the friendship of all parties, without enlisting in any, blushed for the unmanly conduct of Cicero; and in the censorial style of Cato, instead of his own plausible dialect, severely reproached him for continuing so meanly attached to his former

fortunes. Solitude had no influence over a mind so weak and depressed as to turn the worst side of every subject to its view. He died, however, with greater heroism than he lived. "Approach, old soldier!" cried he, from his litter, to Popilius Lœnas, his former client and present murderer, "and, if you have the courage, take my life."

"These instances," says Lord Bolingbroke, "show, that as change of place, simply considered, can render no man unhappy; so the other evils which are objected to exile, either can not happen to wise and virtuous men, or, if they do happen to them, can not render them miserable. Stones are hard, and cakes of ice are cold, and all who feel them feel alike; but the good or the bad events which fortune brings upon us, are felt according to the qualities that we, not they, possess. They are in themselves indifferent and common accidents, and they acquire strength by nothing but our vice or our weakness. Fortune can dispense neither felicity, nor infelicity, unless we co-operate with her. Few men who are unhappy under the loss of an estate, would be happy in the possession of it; and those who deserve to enjoy the advantages which exile takes away, will not be unhappy when they are deprived of them."

An exile, however, can not hope to see his days glide quietly away in rural delights and philosophic repose, except he has conscientiously discharged those duties which he owed to the world, and given that example of rectitude to future ages, which every character exhibits who is as great after his fall as he was at the most brilliant period of his prosperity.

CHAPTER VI.

ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE IN OLD AGE; AND ON THE BED OF DEATH.

THE decline of life, and particularly the condition of old age, derive from solitude the purest sources of uninterrupted enjoyment. Old age, when considered as a period of comparative quietude and repose, as a serious and contemplative interval between a transitory existence and an approaching immortality, is, perhaps, the most agreeable condition of human life; a condition to which solitude affords a secure harbor against the shattering tempests to which the frail bark of man is continually exposed in the short but dangerous voyage of the world; a harbor from whence he may securely view the rocks and quicksands which threatened his destruction, and which he has happily escaped.

Men are by nature disposed to investigate the various properties of distant objects, before they think of contemplating their own characters; like modern travelers, who visit foreign countries, before they are acquainted with their own. But prudence will exhort the young, and experience teach the aged, to conduct themselves on very different principles; and both the one and the other will find that solitude and self-examination are the beginning and the end of true wisdom.

O! lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul!
Who think in solitude to be alone.
Communion sweet! communion large and high!
Our reason, guardian angel, and our God:

The nearest these when others most remote;
And all, ere long, shall be remote but these.

The levity of youth, by this communion large and high, will be repressed, and the depression which sometimes accompanies old age entirely removed. An unceasing succession of gay hopes, fond desires, ardent wishes, high delights, and unfounded fancies, form the character of our early years; but those which follow are marked with melancholy and increasing sorrows. A mind, however, that is invigorated by observation and experience, remains dauntless and unmoved, amidst both the prosperities and adversities of life. He who is no longer forced to exert his powers, and who at an early period of his life, has well studied the manners of men, will complain very little of the ingratitude with which his favors and anxieties have been requited. All he asks is, that the world will let him alone; and having a thorough knowledge not only of his own character, but of mankind, he is enabled to enjoy the comforts of repose.

It is finely remarked by a celebrated German, that there are political as well as religious Carthusians, and that both orders are sometimes composed of most excellent and pious characters. "It is," says this admirable writer, "in the deepest and most sequestered recesses of forests that we meet with the peaceful sage, the calm observer, the friend of truth, and the lover of his country, who renders himself beloved by his wisdom, revered for his knowledge, respected for his veracity, and adored for his benevolence; whose confidence and friendship every one is anxious to gain; and who excites admiration by the eloquence of his conversation, and esteem by the virtue of his actions, while he raises wonder by the obscurity of his name, and the mode of his existence. The giddy multitude solicit him to relinquish his solitude, and seat himself on the throne; but they perceive inscribed on his forehead, beaming with sacred fire, *odi profanum vulgus et arceo;* and, instead

of being his seducers, become his disciples." But, alas! this extraordinary character, whom I saw some years ago in Wateravia, who inspired me with filial reverence and affection, and whose animated countenance announced the superior wisdom and happy tranquillity of his mind, is now no more. There did not perhaps at that time exist in any court a more profound statesman; he was intimately acquainted with all, and corresponded personally with some of the most celebrated sovereigns of Europe. I never met with an observer who penetrated with such quick and accurate sagacity into the minds and characters of men, who formed such true opinions of the world, or criticised with such discerning accuracy the actions of those who were playing important parts on its various theaters. There never was a mind more free, more enlarged, more powerful, or more engaging; or an eye more lively and inquisitive. He was the man, of all others, in whose company I could have lived with the highest pleasure and died with the greatest comfort. The rural habitation in which he lived was simple in its structure, and modest in its attire; the surrounding grounds and gardens, laid out in the happy simplicity of nature; and his fare, healthy and frugal. I never felt a charm more powerful than that which filled my bosom while I contemplated the happy solitude of the venerable Baron de Schautenbach, at Wateravia.

Rousseau, feeling his end approach, also passed the few remaining years of an uneasy life in solitude. It was during old age that he composed the best and greater part of his admirable works; but although he employed his time with judicious activity, his feelings had been too deeply wounded by the persecutions of the world, to enable him to find complete tranquillity in the bowers of retirement. Unhappily, he continued ignorant of the danger of his situation, until the vexations of his mind, the disorders of his body, and his

unpardonable neglect of health, had rendered his recovery impossible. It was not until he had been many years tormented by physicians, and racked by a painful malady, that he took up his pen; and his years increased only to increase the visible effect of his mental and corporeal afflictions, which at length became so acute that he frequently raved wildly, or fainted away under the excess of his pains.

It is observed by one of our refined critics, that "all Rousseau wrote during his old age is the effect of madness." "Yes," replied his fair friend, with greater truth, "but he raved so pleasantly we are delighted to run mad with him."

The mind becomes more disposed to seek its "guardian angel and its God," the nearer it approaches the confines of mortality. When the ardent fire of youth is extinguished, and the meridian heat of life's short day subsides into the soft tranquillity and refreshing quietude of its evening, we feel the important necessity of devoting some few hours to pious meditation before we close our eyes in endless night; and the very idea of being able to possess this interval of holy leisure, and to hold this sacred communion with God, recreates the mind, like the approach of spring after a dull, a dreary, and a distressing writer.

Petrarch scarcely perceived the approaches of old age. By constant activity he contrived to render retirement always happy, and year after year rolled unperceived away in pleasures and tranquillity. Seated in a verdant arbor in the vicinity of a Carthusian monastery, about three miles from Milan, he wrote to his friend Settimo with a simplicity of heart unknown in modern times: "Like a wearied traveler, I increase my pace in proportion as I approach the end of my journey. I pass my days and nights in reading and writing; these agreeable occupations alternately relieve each other, and are the only sources from whence I derive my pleasures. I lie awake and think, and divert my mind by every means in

my power; and my ardor increases as new difficulties arise. Novelties incite and obstacles sharpen my resistance. The labors I endure are certain, for my hand is tired of holding my pen; but whether I shall reap the harvest of my toils I cannot tell. I am anxious to transmit my name to posterity; but if I am disappointed in this wish, I am satisfied the age in which I live, or at least my friends, will know me, and this fame will satisfy me. My health is so good, my constitution so robust, and my temperament so warm, that neither the advance of years, nor the most serious occupation, have power to conquer the rebellious enemy by which I am incessantly attacked. I should certainly become its victim, as I have frequently been, if Providence did not protect me. On the approach of spring, I take up arms against the flesh, and am even at this moment struggling for my liberty against this dangerous enemy."

A rural retreat, however lonely or obscure, contributes to increase the fame of those great and noble characters who relinquish the world at an advanced period of their lives, and pass the remainder of their days in solitude; their luster beams from their retirement with brighter rays than those which shone around them in their earliest days, and on the theater of their glory. "It is in solitude, in exile, and on the bed of death," says Pope, "that the noblest characters of antiquity shone with the greatest splendor; it was then they performed the greatest services; for it was during those periods that they became useful examples." And Rousseau appears to have entertained the same opinion: "It is noble," says he, "to exhibit to the eyes of men an example of the life they ought to lead. The man who, when age or ill health has deprived him of activity, dare to resound from his retreat the voice of truth, and to announce to mankind the folly of those opinions which render them miserable, is a public benefactor. I should be of much less use to my countrymen, were I to live among

them, than I can possibly be in my retreat. Of what importance can it be, whether I live in one place or another, provided I discharge my duties properly?"

A certain young lady of Germany, however, was of opinion that Rousseau was not entitled to praise. She maintained that he was a dangerous corrupter of the youthful mind, and that he had very improperly discharged his duties, by discovering in his Confessions the moral defects and vicious inclinations of his heart. "Such a work written by a man of virtue," said she, "would render him an object of abhorrence; but Rousseau, whose writings are calculated to captivate the wicked, proves, by his story of the Ruban Vole, that he possesses a heart of the blackest dye. It is evident, from many passages in that publication, that it was vanity alone which guided his pen; and from many others, that he felt himself conscious he was disclosing falsehoods. There is nothing, in short, throughout the work that bears the stamp of truth; and all it informs us of is, that Madame de Warens was the original from which he drew the character of Julia. These unjustly celebrated Confessions contain, generally speaking, a great many fine words, and but very few good thoughts. If, instead of rejecting every opportunity of advancing himself in life, he had engaged in some industrious profession, he might have been more useful to the world than he has been by the publication of his dangerous writings."

This incomparable criticism upon Rousseau merits preservation; for, in my opinion, it is the only one of its kind. The Confessions of Rousseau is a work certainly not proper for the eye of youth; but to me it appears one of the most remarkable philosophic publications that the present age has produced. The fine style and enchanting colors in which it is written are its least merits. The most distant posterity will read it with rapture, without inquiring what age the venerable

author had attained when he gave to the world this last proof of his sincerity.

Age, however advanced, is capable of enjoying real pleasure. A virtuous old man passes his days with serene gayety, and receives, in the happiness he feels from the benedictions of all around him, a rich reward for the rectitude and integrity of his past life; for the mind reviews with joyful satisfaction its honorable and self-approving transactions; nor does the near prospect of the tomb give fearful emotion to his undismayed and steady soul.

The Empress Maria Theresa has caused her own mausoleum to be erected, and frequently, accompanied by her family, visits with serenity and composure, a monumental depository, the idea of which conveys such painful apprehension to almost every mind. Pointing it out to the observation of her children, "Ought we to be proud or arrogant," says she, "when we here behold the tomb in which, after a few years, the poor remains of royalty must quietly repose?"

There are few men capable of thinking with so much sublimity. Every one, however, is capable of retiring, at least occasionally, from the corruptions of the world; and if, during this calm retreat, they shall happily learn to estimate their past days with propriety, and to live the remainder in private virtue and public utility, the tomb will lose its menacing aspect, and death appear like the calm evening of a fine and well-spent day.

"Blest be that hand divine, which gently laid
My heart at rest beneath this humble shed.
The world's a stately bark on dang'rous seas,
With pleasure seen, but boarded at our peril;
Here, on a silent plank, thrown safe ashore
I hear the tumult of the distant throng,
As that of seas remote, or dying storms;
And meditate on scenes more silent still;
Pursue my theme, and fight the fear of death.
Here, like a shepherd gazing from his hut,

Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff,
Eager ambition's fiery chase I see;
I see the circling hunt of noisy men
Burst law's enclosure, leap the mounds of right,
Pursuing and pursued, each other's prey,
As wolves for rapine; as the fox for wiles;
Till death, that mighty hunter, earths them all."

When Addison perceived that he was given over by his physicians, and felt his end approaching, he sent for Lord Warwick, a young man of very irregular life and loose opinions, whom he had diligently, but vainly endeavored to reclaim, but who by no means wanted respect for the person of his preceptor, and was sensible of the loss he was about to sustain. When he entered the chamber of his dying friend, Addison, who was extremely feeble, and whose life at that moment hung quivering on his lips, observed a profound silence. The youth, after a long and awful pause, at length said, in low and trembling accents, "Sir, you desire to see me; signify your commands, and be assured I will execute them with religious fidelity." Addison took him by the hand, and with his expiring breath, replied, "Observe with what tranquillity a Christian can die." Such is the consolation which springs from a due sense of the principles, and a proper practice of the precepts of our holy religion; such is the high reward a life of simplicity and innocence bestows.

He who during the retirement of the day seriously studies, and during the silence of the night piously contemplates the august doctrines of revelation, will be convinced of their power by experiencing their effect. He will review with composure his past errors in society, perceive with satisfaction his present comfort in solitude, and aspire with hope to future happiness in heaven. He will think with the freedom of a philosopher, live with the piety of a Christian, and renounce with ease the poisonous pleasures of society from a conviction that they

weaken the energies of his mind, and prevent his heart from raising itself toward his God. Digusted with the vanities and follies of public life, he will retire into privacy, and contemplate the importance of eternity. Even if he be still obliged occasionally to venture on the stormy sea of busy life, he will avoid with greater skill and prudence the rocks and sands by which he is surrounded, and steer with greater certainty and effect from the tempests which most threaten his destruction; rejoicing less at the pleasant course which a favorable wind and clear sky may afford him, than at his having happily eluded such a multitude of dangers.

The hours consecrated to God in solitude, are not only the most important, but when we are habituated to this holy communion, the happiest of our lives. Every time we silently elevate our thoughts toward the great Author of our being, we recur to a contemplation of ourselves: and being rendered sensible of our nearer approach, not only in idea, but in reality, to the seat of eternal felicity, we retire, without regret, from the noisy multitude of the world. A philosophic view and complete knowledge of the nature of the species creep by degrees upon the mind: we scrutinize our characters with greater severity; feel with redoubled force the necessity of a reformation; and reflect with substantial effect on the glorious end for which we were created. Conscious that human actions are acceptable to the Almighty mind only in proportion as they are prompted by motives of the purest virtue, men ought benevolently to suppose that every good work springs from an untainted source, and is performed merely for the benefit of mankind; but human actions are exposed to the influence of a variety of secondary causes, and can not always be the pure production of an unbiased heart. Good works, however, from whatever motive they arise, always convey a certain satisfaction and complacency to the mind. But when the real merit of the performer is to be actually investigated, the

inquiry must always be, whether the mind was not actuated by sinister views, by the hope of gratifying a momentary passion, by the feelings of self-love, rather than by the sympathies of brotherly affection: and these subtle and important questions are certainly discussed with closer scrutiny, and the motives of the heart explored and developed with greater sincerity, during those hours when we are alone before God than in any other situation.

Firm and untainted virtue, indeed, can not be so easily and efficaciously acquired, as by practicing the precepts of christianity in the bowers of solitude. Religion refines our moral sentiments, disengages the heart from every vain desire, renders it tranquil under misfortunes, humble in the presence of God, and steady in the society of men. A life passed in the practice of every virtue, affords us a rich reward for all the hours we have consecrated to its duties, and enables us in the silence of solitude to raise our pure hands and chaste hearts in pious adoration to our Almighty Father!

How "low, flat, stale and unprofitable seem all the uses of this world," when the mind, boldly soaring beyond this lower sphere, indulges the idea that the pleasures which result from a life of innocence and virtue may be faintly analogous to the felicities of heaven! At least, I trust we may be permitted unoffendingly to conceive, according to our wordly apprehensions, that a free and unbounded liberty of thought and action, a high admiration of the universal system of nature, a participation of the divine essence, a perfect communion of friendship, and a pure interchange of love, may be a portion of the enjoyments we hope to experience in those regions of peace and happiness where no impure or improper sentiment can taint the mind. But notions like these, although they agreeably flatter our imaginations, shed at present but a glimmering light upon this awful subject, and must continue, like dreams and visions of the mind, until the clouds and thick darkness

which surrounded the tomb of mortality no longer obscure the bright glories of everlasting life; until the vail shall be rent asunder, and the Eternal shall reveal those things which no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, and, which passeth all understanding. For I acknowledge, with awful reverence, and silent submission, that the knowledge of eternity is to the human intellect like that which the color of crimson appeared to be in the mind of a blind man, who compared it to the sound of a trumpet. I can not, however, conceive, that a notion more comfortable can be entertained, than that eternity promises a constant and uninterrupted tranquillity; although I am perfectly conscious that it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the nature of that enjoyment which is produced by a happiness without end. An everlasting tranquillity is, in my imagination, the highest possible felicity, because I know of no felicity upon earth higher than that which a peaceful mind and contented heart afford.

Since, therefore, internal and external tranquillity is, upon earth, an incontestable commencement of beatitude, it may be extremely useful to believe, that a rational and qualified seclusion from the tumults of the world may so highly rectify the faculties of the human soul, as to enable us to acquire in "blissful solitude" the elements of that happiness we expect to enjoy in the world to come.

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now,
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content, indeed, to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects more illustrious in her view;

And occupied as earnestly as she;
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has prov'd them vain.
He can not skim to the ground like such rare birds
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honors, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore, in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifted from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE MOTIVES TO SOLITUDE.

THE motives which induce men to exchange the tumultuous joys of society, for the calm and temperate pleasures of solitude, are various and accidental; but whatever may be the final cause of such an exchange, it is generally founded on an inclination to escape from some present or impending constraint; to shake off the shackles of the world; to taste the sweets of soft repose; to enjoy the free and undisturbed exertion of the intellectual faculties; or to perform, beyond the reach of ridicule, the important duties of religion. But the busy pursuits of worldly-minded men prevent the greater part of the species from feeling these motives, and, of course, from tasting the sweets of unmolested existence. Their pleasures are pursued in paths which lead to very different goals; and the real, constant, and unaffected lover of retirement is a character so rarely found, that it seems to prove the truth of Lord Verulam's observation, that he who is really attached to solitude, must be either more or less than man; and certain it is, that while the wise and virtuous discover in retirement an uncommon and transcending brightness of character, the vicious and the ignorant are buried under its weight, and sink even beneath their ordinary level. Retirement gives additional firmness to the principles of those who seek it from a noble love of independence, but loosens the feeble consistency of those who only seek it from novelty and caprice.

To render solitude serviceable, the powers of the mind, and

the sensibilities of the heart, must be co-equal, and reciprocally regulate each other; weakness of intellect, when joined with quick feelings, hurries its possessor into all the tumult of worldly pleasure; and when mingled with torpid insensibility, impels him to the cloister. Extremes, both in solitude and in society, are equally baneful.

A strong sense of shame, the keen compunctions of conscience, a deep regret for past follies, the mortification arising from disappointed hopes, and the dejection which accompanies disordered health, sometimes so affect the spirits, and destroy the energies of the mind, that the soul shrinks back upon itself at the very approach of company, and withdraws to the shades of solitude, only to brood and languish in obscurity. The inclination to retire, in cases of this description, arises, from a fear of meeting the reproaches or disregard of an unpitying and unreflecting world, and not from that erect spirit which disposes the mind to self-enjoyment.

The disgust arising from satiety of worldly pleasures, frequently induces a temporary desire for solitude. The dark and gloomy nature, indeed, of this disposition, is such as neither the splendors of a throne, nor the light of philosophy, are able to eradicate and dispel. The austere and petulant Heraclitus, abandoned all the pleasures and comforts of society, in the vain hope of being able to gratify his discontented mind, by indulging an antipathy against his fellow-creatures; flying from their presence, he retired, like his predecessor, Timon, to a high mountain, where he lived for many years among the beasts of the desert, on the rude produce of the earth, regardless of all the comforts a civilized society is capable of bestowing. Such a temper of mind proceeds from a sickened intellect and disordered sensibility, and indicates the loss of that fine, but firm sense of pleasure, from which alone all real enjoyment must spring. He who having tasted all that can delight the senses, warm the heart, and satisfy

the mind, secretly sighs over the vanity of his enjoyments, and beholds all the cheering objects of life with indifference, is, indeed, a melancholy example of the sad effects which result from an intemperate pursuit of worldly pleasures. Such a man may, perhaps, abandon society, for it is no longer capable of affording him delight; but he will be debarred from all rational solitude, because he is incapable of enjoying it, and a refuge to the brute creation seems his only resource. I have, indeed, observed even noblemen and princes in the midst of abundance, and surrounded by all the splendor that successful ambition, high state, vast riches, and varying pleasures can confer, sinking the sad victims of satiety; disgusted with their glories; and dissatisfied with all those enjoyments which are supposed to give a higher relish to the soul; but they had happily enriched their minds with notions far superior to all those which flow from the corrupted scenes of vitiated pleasures; and they found in solitude, a soft and tranquil pillow, which invited their perturbed minds, and at length lulled their feelings into calm repose. These characters were betrayed for a time by the circumstances which surrounded their exalted stations into an excess of enjoyment; but they were able to relish the simple occupations, and to enjoy the tranquil amusements of retirement, with as much satisfaction as they had formerly pursued the political intrigues of the cabinet, the hostile glories of the field, or the softer indulgences of peaceful luxury; and were thereby rendered capable of deriving comfort and consolation from that source which seems only to highten and exasperate the miseries of those whose minds are totally absorbed in the dissipations of life.

The motives, indeed, which lead men either to temporary retirement, or absolute solitude, are innumerably various. Minds delicately susceptible to the impressions of virtue, frequently avoid society, only to avoid the pain they feel in

observing the vices and follies of the world. Minds active and vigorous, frequently retire to avoid the clogs and incumbrances by which the tumults and engagements of society distract and impede the free and full enjoyment of their faculties. The basis, indeed, of every inclination to solitude is the love of liberty, either mental or corporeal; a freedom from all constraint and interruption; but the form in which the inclination displays itself, varies according to the character and circumstances of the individual.

Men who are engaged in pursuits foreign to the natural inclination of their minds, sigh continually for retirement, as the only means of recruiting their fatigued spirits, and procuring a comfortable repose. Scenes of tranquillity can alone afford them any idea of enjoyment. A refined sense of duty, indeed, frequently induces noble minds to sacrifice all personal pleasures to the great interests of the public, or the private benefits of their fellow-creatures; and they resist every opposing obstacle with courage, and bear every adversity with fortitude, under those cheering sentiments and proud delights, which result from the pursuits of active charity and benevolence, even though their career be thwarted by those whose advantages they design to promote. The exhilarating idea of being instrumental in affording relief to suffering humanity, reconciles every difficulty, however great; prompts to new exertions, however fruitless; and sustains them in those arduous conflicts in which all who aspire to promote the interest, and improve the happiness of mankind, must occasionally engage, especially when opposed by the pride and profligacy of the rich and great, and the obstinacy and caprice of the ignorant and unfeeling. But the most virtuous and steady minds can not always bear up against "a sea of troubles, or by opposing, end them;" and, depressed by temporary adversities, will arraign the cruelty of their condition, and sigh for the shades of peace and tranquillity. How transcendant must be

the enjoyment of a great and good minister, who, after having anxiously attended to the important business of the state, and disengaged himself from the necessary but irksome occupation of official detail, refreshes his mind in the calm of some delightful retreat, with works of taste, and thoughts of fancy and imagination! A change, indeed, both of scene and sentiment, is absolutely necessary, not only in the serious and important employments, but even in the common occupations and idle amusements of life. Pleasure springs from contrast. The most charming object loses a portion of its power to delight, by being continually beheld. Alternate society and solitude are necessary to the full enjoyment of both the pleasures of the world and the delights of retirement. It is, however, asserted by the celebrated Pascal, whose life was far from being inactive, that quietude is a beam of the original purity of our nature, and that the hight of human happiness is in solitude and tranquillity. Tranquillity, indeed, is the wish of all; the good, while pursuing the track of virtue; the great, while following the star of glory; and the little, while creeping in the styes of dissipation, sigh for tranquillity, and make it the great object which they ultimately hope to attain. How anxiously does the sailor, on the high and giddy mast, when rolling through tempestuous seas, cast his eyes over the foaming billows, and anticipate the calm security he hopes to enjoy when he reaches the wished for shore! Even kings grow weary of their splendid slavery, and nobles sicken under increasing dignities. All, in short, feel less delight in the actual enjoyment of worldly pursuits, however great and honorable they may be, than in the idea of their being able to relinquish them, and retire to

"* * * some calm sequestered spot;
The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

The restless and ambitious Pyrrhus hoped that ease and

tranquillity would be the ultimate reward of his enterprising conquests. Frederick the Great discovered, perhaps unintentionally, how pleasing and satisfactory the idea of tranquillity was to his mind, when, immediately after he had gained a glorious and important victory, he exclaimed on the field of battle, "O! that my anxieties may now be ended!" The Emperor Joseph also displayed the predominancy of his passion for tranquillity and retirement, when on asking the famous German pedestrian, Baron Grothaus, what countries he next intended to traverse, was told a long number in rapid succession. "And what then?" continued the emperor. "Why then," replied the baron, "I intend to retire to the place of my nativity, and enjoy myself in rural quietude, and the cultivation of my patrimonial farm." "Ah! my good friend," exclaimed the emperor, "if you will trust the voice of sad experience, you had better neglect the walk, and retire, before it is too late, to the quietude and tranquillity you propose."

Publius Scipio, surnamed Africanus, during the time that he was invested with the highest offices of Rome, and immediately engaged in the most important concerns of the empire, withdrew, whenever an opportunity occurred, from public observation, to peaceful privacy; and though not devoted, like Tully, to the elegant occupations of literature and philosophy, declared that "he was never less alone, than when alone." He was, says Plutarch, incomparably the first, both in virtue and power, of the Romans of his time; but in his highest tide of fortune, he voluntarily abandoned the scene of his glory, and calmly retired to his beautiful villa in the midst of a romantic forest, near Liturnum, where he closed, in philosophic tranquillity, the last years of a long and splendid life.

Cicero, in the plentitude of his power, at a time when his influence over the minds of his fellow-citizens was at its hight, retired, with the retiring liberties of his country, to his Tus-

culum villa, to deplore the approaching fate of his beloved city, and to ease, in soothing solitude, the anguish of his heart.

Horace, also, the gay and elegant fovorite of the great Augustus, even in the meridian rays of royal favor, renounced the smiles of greatness, and all the seductive blandishments of an imperial court, to enjoy his happy muse among the romantic wilds of his sequestered villa of Tibur, near the lake Albunea.

But, there are few characters who have passed the concluding scenes of life with more real dignity, than the emperor Dioclesian. In the twenty-first year of his reign, though he had never practiced the lessons of philosophy either in the attainment or the use of supreme power, and although his reign had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted success, he executed his memorable resolution of abdicating the empire, and gave the world the first example of a resignation which has not been very frequently imitated by succeeding monarchs. Dioclesian was at this period only fifty-nine years of age, and in the full possession of his mental faculties; but he had vanquished all his enemies, and executed all his designs; and his active life, his wars, his journeys, the cares of royalty, and his application to business having impaired his constitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age, he resolved to pass the remainder of his days in honorable repose; to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune; and to relinquish the theater of the world to his younger and more active associates. The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a spacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor ascended a lofty throne, and, in a speech full of reason and dignity, declared his intention both to the people and to the soldiers, who were assembled on this extraordinary occasion. As soon as he had divested himself of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude; and, traversing the city

in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favorite retirement which he had chosen in his native country of Dalmatia. The emperor, who, from a servile origin, had raised himself to the throne, passed the last nine years of his life in a private condition at Salona. Reason had dictated, and content seems to have accompanied his retreat, in which he enjoyed, for a long time, the respect of those princes to whom he had resigned the possession of the world. It is seldom that minds long exercised in business, have formed any habits of conversing with themselves, and in the loss of power, they principally regret the want of occupation. The amusements of letters and of devotion, which afford so many resources in solitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Dioclesian; but he had preserved, or, at least, he soon recovered, a taste for the most innocent as well as natural pleasures; and his leisure hours were sufficiently employed in building, planting and gardening. His answer to Maximian is deservedly celebrated. He was solicited by that restless old man to resume the reins of government and the imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing, that if he could show Maximian the cabbages he had planted at Salona, he should be no longer urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power. In his conversations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged, that of all the arts the most difficult was that of reigning; and he expressed himself on that favorite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the result only of experience. "How often," was he accustomed to say, "is it the interest of four or five ministers to combine together to deceive the sovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his knowledge; he can only see with their eyes; he hears nothing but their misrepresentations. He confers the most important offices upon vice and weakness, and disgraces the most virtuous and deserving among his subjects; and by such

infamous acts the best and wisest princes are sold to the venal corruption of their courtiers." A just estimate of greatness, and the assurance of immortal fame, improve our relish for the pleasures of retirement.

Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the east; a female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia, the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex, who spread the terror of her arms over Arabia, Armenia and Persia, and kept even the legions of the Roman Empire in awe, was, after the two great battles of Antioch and Emesa, at length subdued, and made the illustrious captive of the Emperor Aurelian; but the conquerer, respecting the sex, the beauty, the courage, and endowments of the Syrian queen, not only preserved her life, but presented her with an elegant villa at Tibur or Tivoli, about twenty miles from Rome, where, in happy tranquillity, she fed the greatness of her soul with the noble images of Homer, and the exalted preeepts of Plato; supported the adversity of her fortunes with fortitude and resignation, and learned that the anxieties attendant on ambition are happily exchanged for the enjoyments of ease, and the comforts of philosophy.

Charles V resigned the government of the empire to his brother, the king of the Romans; and transferred all claims of obedience and allegiance to him from the Germanic body, in order that he might no longer be detained from that retreat for which he had long languished. In passing, some years before, from Vallodolid to Placentia, in the province of Estramadura, he was struck with the delightful situation of the monastery of St. Justus, belonging to the order of St. Jerome, not many miles distant from the town; and observed to some of his attendants, that this was a spot to which Dioclesian might have retired with pleasure. The impression remained upon his mind, and he determined to make it the place of his

own retreat. It was seated in a vale of no great extent, watered by a small brook, and surrounded by rising grounds, covered with lofty trees; and from the nature of the soil, as well as the temperature of the climate, was esteemed the most healthful and delicious situation in Spain. Some months before his resignation, he had sent an architect thither to add a new apartment to the monastery for his accommodation; but he gave strict orders that the style of the building should be such as suited his present station rather than his former dignity. It consisted only of six rooms; four of them in the form of friar's cells, with naked walls; the other two, each twenty feet square, were hung with brown cloth, and furnished in the most simple manner; they were all on a level with the ground, with a door on one side into the garden of which Charles himself had given the plan, and had filled it with various plants, which he intended to cultivate with his own hands. On the other side they communicated with the chapel of the monastery, in which he was to perform his devotions. In this humble retreat, hardly sufficient for the comfortable accommodation of a private gentleman, did Charles enter with twelve domestics only, and buried in solitude and silence, his grandeur, his ambition, and all those vast projects which, during almost half a century, had alarmed and agitated Europe; filling every kingdom in it, by turns, with the terror of his arms, and the dread of being subdued by his power.

These instances of resignation and retirement, to which many others might have been added, sufficiently prove that a desire to live in free leisure, independent of the restraints of society, is one of the most powerful affections of the human mind; and that solitude judiciously and rationally employed, amply compensates all that is sacrificed for the purpose of enjoying it.

But there are many other resources from whence an anti-social disposition may arise, which merit consideration. That

terrible malady, the hypochondria, frequently renders the unhappy sufferer, not only averse to society in general, but ever fearful of meeting a human being; and the still more dreadful malady, a wounded heart, increases our antipathy to mankind. The fear of unfounded calumny also sometimes drives weak and dejected minds into the imaginary shelter of obscurity; and even strong and honest characters, prone to disclose their real sentiments, are disgusted at the world from a consciousness of its being unable to listen temperately to the voice of truth. The obstinacy with which mankind persist in habitual errors, and the violence with which they indulge inveterate passions, a deep regret for their follies, and the horror which their vices create, drives us frequently from their presence. The love of science, a fondness for the arts, and an attachment to the immortal works of genius, induce, I trust, not a few to neglect all anxiety to learn the common news of the day, and keep them in some calm, sequestered retreat, far from the unmeaning manners of the noisy world, improving the genuine feelings of their hearts, and storing their minds with the principles of true philosophy. There are others, though I fear they are few, who, impressed by a strong sense of the duties of religion, and feeling how incompatible with their practice are most, if not all, the factious joys of social life, retire from the corrupted scene, to contemplate, in sacred privacy, the attributes of a Being unalterably pure, and infinitely good; to impress upon their minds so strong a sense of the importance of obedience to the divine will, of the value of the reward promised to virtue, and the terrors of the punishment denounced against crimes, as may overbear all temptations which temporal hope or fear can bring in their way, and enable them to bid equal defiance to joy and sorrow; to turn away at one time from the allurements of ambition, and press forward at another against the threats of calamity.

The dejection occasioned by the hypochondria renders the mind not only averse from, but wholly incapable of, any pleasure, and induces the unhappy sufferer to seek a solitude by which it is increased. The influence of this dreadful malady is so powerful, that it destroys all hope of remedy, and prevents those exertions, by which alone, we are told, it can be cured:

To cure the mind's wrong bias—spleen,
Some recommend the bowling-green;
Some, hilly walks; all, exercise;
Fling but a stone, the giant dies;
Laugh, and be well. Monkies have been
Extreme good doctors for the spleen;
And kittens, if the humor hit,
Have harlequin'd away the fit.

But, alas! the heart shuts itself against every pleasing sensation, and the mind dismisses every cheering sentiment. Joy opens in vain its festal arms to receive him; and he shuns embraces, whose light and mirthful air would only serve to increase the melancholy of his dreary and distempered mind. Even the tender, affectionate offices of friendship, in endeavoring to soothe and divert his mind by lively conversation and social intercourse, appear officious and ill-timed. His spirits are quite dejected; his faculties become torpid; and his sense of enjoyment is annihilated. The charming air, which breathes to others the sweetest fragrance and most invigorating delights, feels to him like a pestilent congregation of vapors:

His pensive spirit takes the lonely grove.
Nightly he visits all the sylvan scenes,
Where, far remote, a melancholy moon,
Raising her head, serene and shorn of beams,
Throws here and there the glimm'rings thro' the trees,
To make more awful darkness.

Conscious that his frame is totally unstrung, and that his pulse is incapable of beating in any pleasant unison with the

feelings of the healthful friends, he withers into sorrowful decay. Every object around him appears to be at enmity with his feelings, and comes shapeless and discolored to his disordered eyes. The gentle voice of pity grates his ears with harsh and hollow sounds, and seems to reproach him with insulting tones. Stricken by his dreadful malady, the lamentable effects of which a cruel and unfeeling world so often ridicule and despise, and constantly tearing open the wound it has occasioned, the afflicted spirit flies from every scene of social joy and animating pleasure, seeks, as a sole resource, to hide its sorrows in solitary seclusion, and awaits, in lingering sufferance, the stroke of death.

The erroneous opinions, perverse dispositions, and inveterate prejudices of the world, are sometimes the causes which induce men to retire from society, and seek in solitude the enjoyments of innocence and truth. Careless of a commerce with those for whom they can entertain no esteem, their minds naturally incline toward those scenes in which their fancy paints the fairest forms of felicity. He, indeed, whose free and independent spirit is resolved to permit his mind to think for itself; who disdains to form his feelings, and to fashion his opinions, upon the capricious notions of the world; who is too candid to expect that others should be guided by his notions, and sufficiently firm not to obey implicitly the hasty opinions of others; who seeks to cultivate the just and manly feelings of the heart, and to pursue truths in the paths of science—must detach himself from the degenerate crowd, and seek his enjoyments in retirement. For, to those who love to consult their own ideas, to form opinions upon their own reasonings and discernment, and to express only such sentiments as they really feel, a society whose judgments are borrowed, whose literature is only specious, and whose principles are unfounded, must not only be irksomely insipid, but morally dangerous. The firm and noble-minded disdain to bow their necks to the

slavish yoke of vulgar prejudice, and appeal, in support of their opinions, to the higher tribunal of sense and reason, from the partial and ill-formed sentences of conceited critics, who, destitute themselves of any sterling merit, endeavor to depreciate the value of that coin whose weight and purity render it current, and to substitute their own base and varnished compositions in its stead. Those self-created wits, who proudly place themselves in the professor's chair, look with an envious and malignant eye on all the works of genius, taste and sense; and as their interests are intimately blended with the destruction of every sublime and elegant production, their cries are raised against them the moment they appear. To blast the fame of merit is their chief object and their highest joy; and their lives are industriously employed to stifle the discoveries, to impede the advancement, to condemn the excellency, and to pervert the meaning of their more ingenious cotemporaries. Like loathsome toads, they grovel on the ground, and, as they move along, emit a nasty slime or frothy venom on the sweetest shrubs and fairest flowers of the fields.

From the society of such characters, who seem to consider the noble productions of superior intellect, the fine and vigorous flights of fancy, the brilliant effusions of a sublime imagination, and the refined feelings of the heart, as fancied conceits or wild deliriums, those who examine them by a better standard than that of fashion or common taste, fly with delight.

The reign of envy, however, although it is perpetual as to the existence of the passion, is only transitory as to the objects of its tyranny; and the merit which has fallen the victim of its rage, is frequently raised by the hand of truth, and placed on the throne of public applause. A production of genius, however the ears of its author were deafened, during his life, by the clamors of calumny, and hisses of

ignorance, is reviewed with impartiality when he dies, and revived by the acclamations of ingenuous applause. The reproach which the life of a great and good man is continually casting on his mean and degenerate cotemporaries, is silenced by his death. He is remembered only in the character of his works; and his fame increases with the successive generations, which his sentiments and opinions contribute to enlighten and adorn.

The history of the celebrated English philosopher, David Hume, affords, perhaps, a stronger instance of the dangers to which wit and learning are exposed from the malicious shafts of envy, ignorance and intolerance, than that of any other author. The tax, indeed, is common to authors of every description, but it frequently falls the heaviest on the highest heads. This profound philosopher and elegant historian, possessed a mild temper; a lively, social disposition; a high sense of friendship, and incorruptible integrity. His manners, indeed, appeared, at first sight, cold and repulsive; for he had sacrificed little to the graces; but his mind was invariably cheerful, and his affections uncommonly warm and generous; and neither his ardent desire of fame, nor the gross and unfounded calumnies of his enemies, were capable of disturbing the happy tranquillity of his heart. His life was passed in the constant exercise of humanity and benevolence; and even those who had been seduced, by the jealous and vindictive artifices of others, wantonly to attack his fame and character with obloquy and reproach, experienced his kindness and acknowledged his virtues. He would never, indeed, confess that his friends had ever had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of his character or conduct, or that he had ever been attacked either by the baleful tooth of envy, or the rage of civil or religious faction. His company, indeed, was equally agreeable to all the classes of society; and young and old, rich and poor, listened with

pleasure to his conversation, and quitted his company with regret; for although he was deeply learned, and his discourses replete with sagacity and science, he had the happy art of delivering his sentiments upon all subjects without the appearance of ostentation, or in any way offending the feelings of his hearers.

The interests of religion are said to have suffered by the abuse of his talents; but the precepts of Christianity were never more powerfully recommended, than by the integrity of his morals, and the purity of his life. His benign and gentle spirit, attached to virtue, and averse from every species of vice, essentially promoted the practice of piety, and the duties of a religious mind; and did not, as is always the case with the zeal of persecution and martyrdom, tear away the very foundation of that fabric which it pretends to support. The excellency, indeed, both of the head and heart of this great and good man, enabled him not only to enjoy himself with perfect felicity, but to contribute to the improvement, and increase the happiness of mankind. This is the opinion now generally entertained of the character of Hume; but far different were the sentiments of his cotemporaries upon this subject. It was neither in a barbarous country, nor in an unenlightened age, that he lived; but, although the land was free, the people philosophical, and the spirit of the times provoked the minds of men to metaphysical inquiry, the fame of Hume was wrecked upon his moral and religious writings. He was charged with being a skeptic; but from the propagation of certain doctrines, and the freedom of inquiry which had then gone forth, it is impossible to attribute his disappointments to this cause. A kind of natural prejudice, indeed, prevailed in England at this period against the Scots; but as he did not experience much favor from his own countrymen, no conclusion can be fairly drawn from this circumstance; and the extraordinary History of his Literary

Transactions, a work written by himself, can not be perused without an equal degree of surprise and concern. The contemptuous repulses which his several compositions received from the public, appear incredible; but the facts he relates are undoubtedly authentic; and while they raise a sorrowful regret for the fate of Hume in particular, they most unhappily tend to diminish the ardor of the student, who contemplates the various dangers to which his desire of fame may be exposed, and may, perhaps, induce him to quit the pursuit of an object "so hard to gain, so easy to be lost."

The melancholy history of the literary career of the celebrated Hume, as appears from the short sketch he made of *his own life*, while he calmly waited, under an incurable disorder, the moment of approaching dissolution; a work which proclaims the mildness, the modesty, and the resignation of his temper, as clearly as his other works demonstrate the power and extent of his mind. The history, indeed, of every man, who attempts to destroy the reigning prejudices, or correct the prevailing errors of his age and country, is nearly the same. He who has the happiness to see objects of any description with greater perspicuity than his cotemporaries, and presumes to disseminate his superior knowledge, by the unreserved publication of his opinions, sets himself up as a common mark for the shafts of envy and resentment to pierce, and seldom escapes from being charged with wicked designs against the interests of mankind. A writer, whatever his character, station, or talents may be, will find that he has a host of malevolent inferiors, ready to seize every opportunity of gratifying their humbled pride, by attempting to level his superior merits, and subdue his rising fame. Even the compassionate few, who are ever ready to furnish food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and consolation to the afflicted, seldom feel any other sensation than that of jealousy on beholding the wreath of merit placed on the brow of a deserving rival,

The Ephesians, with republican pride, being unable to endure the reproach which they felt from the pre-eminency of any individual, banished to some other state, the citizen who presumed to excel the generality of his countrymen. It would be, in some measure, adopting this egregious and tyrannical folly, were I to exhort the man whose merits transcend those who are his equals in rank or station, to break off all intercourse and connection with them; but I am certain that he might, by an occasional retirement, elude the effects of their envy, and avoid those provocations to which, by his superiority, he will otherwise be continually exposed.

To treat the frailties of our fellow-creatures with tenderness, to correct their errors with kindness, to view even their vices with pity, and to induce, by every friendly attention, a mutual complacency and good-will, is not only an important moral duty, but a means of increasing the sum of earthly happiness. It is, indeed, difficult to prevent an honest mind from bursting forth with generous indignation against those artful hypocrites, who, by specious and plausible practices, obtain the false character of being wise and good, and obtrude their flimsey and heterodox opinions upon the unthinking world, as the fair and genuine sentiments of truth and virtue. The anger which arises in a generous and ardent mind, on hearing a noble action calumniated, or a useful work illiberally attacked, is not easily restrained; but such feelings should be checked and regulated with a greater degree of caution than even if they were less virtuous and praiseworthy; for, if they are indulged with frequency, their natural violence may weaken the common charities of the mind, and convert its very goodness and love of virtue into a mournful misanthropy or virulent detestation of mankind.

Let not the man, whose exalted mind, improved by study and observation, surveys with a discriminating eye the moral depravities and mental weaknesses of human nature, submit

to treat his envious inferiors with inveterate anger, and undistinguishing revenge. Their envy is a tribute of approbation to his greatness. Let him look with the gentle eye of pity upon those who err rather from the wicked suggestions of others, than from the malevolence of their own hearts; let him not confound the weak and innocent reptile with the scorpion and the viper; let him listen, without emotion, to the malignant barking and envious hissings that every where attend the footsteps of transcendent merit; let him disregard, with philosophic dignity, the senseless clamors of those noisy adversaries, who are blind by prejudice, and deaf to the arguments of sense and reason; let him rather, by a mild and forbearing temper, endeavor to make some impression on their hearts; and if he should find their bosoms susceptible, he may hope in time to convince them of their errors, and, without violence or compulsion, bring back their deluded understandings to a sense of truth, and the practice of virtue; but, if experience convince him that every endeavor to reform them is fruitless and vain, let him—

> Neglect the grumblers of an envious age,
> Vapid in spleen, or brisk in frothy rage;
> Critics, who, ere they understand, defame;
> And seeming friends, who only do not blame;
> And puppet prattlers, whose unconscious throat
> Transmits what the pert witling prompts by rote;
> Let him neglect this blind and babbling crowd,
> T' enjoy the favor of the wise and good.

Slander, however, by fixing her talons on the most virtuous characters, generally defeats her own malice, and proclaims their merit. It may, indeed, tend to diminish their inclination for general society, and to render them in some degree apprehensive of the danger of even well-deserved fame. "Durable fame," says Petrarch, "is only to be derived from the practice of virtue, and from such works as are worthy of

descending from generation to generation. As to praters, gowned gentlemen that walk in their silks, glitter in their jewels, and are pointed at by the people, all their bravery and pomp, their show of knowledge, and their thundering speeches, last only with their lungs, and then vanish into thin smoke; for the acquisition of wealth, and the desires of ambition, are no witnesses of true desert. I think I shall have fame after my death; and that is a fame from which no profit is derived; but, on the contrary, frequently injures, while alive, the person who is to enjoy it when dead. What procured the destruction of Cicero, Demosthenes and Zeno, but foul and haggard envy of their fame? What brought the chosen men of the great ship Argos to Colchis, but the fame of that king's riches? For what else was signified by the Golden Fleece, but the riches seized by these marauders, destitute of true riches, and who were clad with fleeces not their own?" Many, indeed, whose merits have cast a radiance around their characters, have hidden its splendors within the shades of retirement, to avoid giving uneasiness to envy; and, by being deprived of that warm and aspiring tribute of applause which they had gloriously and justly earned, have, in some instances, at least, indulged too keen a sense of the depravity of mankind. Solon, after having in vain exhorted the Athenians to resist the tyranny of Pisistratus, and save the liberties of that country, on which he had conferred such distinguished services, returned to his own house, and placing his weapons at the street door, exclaimed, as a last effort, "*I have done all in my power to save my country and defend its laws!*" and then retired from the tumults of public life, to weep in silence over the servility of the Athenians, and the fate of Athens. History affords many illustrious instances, both ancient and modern, of the like kind; for there never was a statesman, who possessed a great mind and manly feelings, that did not, even during the plenitude of his power,

occasionally wish to escape from the incorrigible vices which prevail in courts, to the enjoyment of the more innocent pleasures and humble virtues which surround the cottage. Such exalted characters can not observe, without the highest disgust, and keenest indignation, the virtues of the best, and the services of the bravest men of the nation, blasted by the envious breath of brainless placemen, or the insidious insinuations of female favorites, whose whole time is employed in caressing their monkies and paroquets, or in aspersing the merits of those who boldly seek their fortune by the open and manly road of true desert, and not by the deep, dark and crooked paths of flattery and intrigue. Can such a man behold the double-dealing and deceitful artifices by which the excellency of princes is corrupted, their imaginations dazzled, their discernment blinded, and their minds led astray without feeling uncommon indignation? Certainly not. But however acutely his bosom may feel, or his tongue express, his sense of such prevailing practices, he must still be forced to see, with even a more contemptuous and painful sensation, that envious rage and jealous asperity, which burst from the cringing crowd of mean and abject courtiers, on hearing the monarch, in the grateful feelings of his heart, applaud the eminent and faithful services of some gallant officer. Dion was the principal statesman at the court of Dionysius, and the deliverer of Sicily. When the younger Dionysius succeeded to the throne of his father, Dion, in the first council that he held, spoke with so much propriety on the existing state of affairs, and on the measures which ought to be taken, that the surrounding courtiers appeared to be mere children in comparison. By the freedom of his counsels he exposed, in a strong light, the slavish principles of those who, through a timorous disingenuity, advised such measures as they thought would please their prince, rather than such as might advance his interest. But what alarmed them most, were the steps he proposed to

take with regard to the impending war with Carthage; for he offered either to go in person to Carthage, and settle an honorable peace with the Carthagenians, or, if war should be inevitable, to fit out and maintain fifty gallies at his own expense. Dionysius was pleased with the magnificence of his spirit; but his courtiers felt that it made them appear little; and agreeing that, at all events, Dion was to be crushed, they spared, for that purpose, no calumny that malice could suggest. They represented to the king that this favorite certainly meant to make himself master by sea, and by that means to obtain the kingdom for his sister's children. There was, moreover, another and obvious cause of their hatred to him, in the reserve of his manners, and the sobriety of his life. They led the young and ill-educated king through every species of debauchery, and were the shameless panderers of his wrong-directed passions. Their enmity to Dion, who had no taste for luxurious enjoyments, was a thing of course; and as he refused to partake with them in their vices, they resolved to strip him of his virtues; to which they gave the name of such vices as are supposed to resemble them. His gravity of manners they called pride; his freedom of speech, insolence; his declining to join in their licentiousness, contempt. It is true, there was a natural haughtiness in his deportment, and an asperity that was unsociable, and difficult of access; so that it was not to be wondered at if he found no ready admission to the ears of a young king, already spoiled by flattery. Willing to impute the irregularities of Dionysius to ignorance and a bad education, Dion endeavored to engage him in a course of liberal studies, and to give him a taste for those sciences which have a tendency to moral improvement. But, in this wise and virtuous resolution, he was opposed by all the artifices of court intrigue.

Men, in proportion as their minds are dignified with noble sentiments, and their hearts succeptible of refined sensibility,

feel a justifiable aversion to the society of such characters, and shrink from the scenes they frequent; but they should cautiously guard against the intrusions of that austerity and moroseness with which such a conduct is but too apt to inspire the most benevolent minds. Disgusted by the vices and follies of the age, the mind becomes insensibly impressed with a hatred toward the species, and losses by degrees that mild and humane temper which is so indispensably necessary to the enjoyment of social happiness. Even he who merely observes the weak or vicious frailties of his fellow-creatures with an intention to study philosophically the nature and disposition of man, can not avoid remembering their defects with severity, and viewing the character he contemplates with contempt, especially if he happens to be the object of their artifices, and the dupe of their villainies. Contempt is closely allied with hatred; and hatred of mankind will corrupt, in time, the fairest mind; it tinges by degrees, every object with the bile of misanthropy; perverts the judgment; and at length looks indiscriminately with an evil eye on the good and bad, engenders suspicion, fear, jealousy, revenge, and all the black catalogue of unworthy and malignant passions; and when these dreadful enemies have extirpated every generous sentiment from the breast, the unhappy victim abhors society, disclaims his species, sighs, like St. Hyacinch, for some distant and secluded island, and with savage barbarity, defends the inviolability of its boundaries by the cruel repulsion, and, perhaps, the death of those unhappy mortals whom misfortune may drive, hapless and unpitied, to its inhospitable shores.

But if misanthropy be capable of producing such direful effects on well-disposed minds, how shocking must be the character whose disposition, naturally rancorous, is hightened and inflamed by an habitual hatred and malignancy toward his fellow-creatures! In Swisserland, I once beheld a monster of this description; I was compelled to visit him by the duties

of my profession; but I shudder while I recollect the enormity of his character. His body was almost as deformed as his mind. Enmity was seated on his distorted brow. Scales of livid incrustation, the joint produce of his corrupted body and distempered mind, covered his face. His horrid figure made me fancy that I saw Medusa's serpents wreathing their baleful folds among the black and matted locks of his disheveled hair; while his red and fiery eyes glared like malignant meteors through the obscurity of his impending eye-brows. Mischief was his sole delight, his greatest luxury, and his highest joy. To sow discord among his neighbors, and to tear open the closing wounds of misery, was his only occupation. His residence was the resort of the disorderly, the receptacle of the vicious, and the asylum of the guilty. Collecting around him the turbulent and discontented of every description, he became the patron of injustice, the protector of villainy, the perpetrator of malice, the inventor of fraud, the propagator of calumny, and the zealous champion of cruelty and revenge; directing, with malignant aim, the barbed shafts of his adherents equally against the comforts of private peace and the blessings of public tranquillity. The bent and inclination of his nature had been so aggravated and confirmed by the "multiplying villainies of his life," that it was impossible for him to refrain one moment from the practice of them, without feeling uneasiness and discontent; and he never appeared perfectly happy, but when new opportunities occurred to glut his infernal soul with the spectacle of human miseries.

The Timon of Lucian was, in some measure, excusable for his hatred to mankind, by the unparalleled wrongs they had heaped upon him. The inexorable antipathy he entertained against the species had been provoked by injuries almost too great for the common fortitude of humanity to endure. His probity, humanity and charity to the poor, had been the ruin of him; or rather his own folly, easiness of disposition, and

want of judgment in his choice of friends. He never discovered that he was giving away his all to wolves and ravens. Whilst these vultures were preying on his liver, he thought them his best friends, and that they fed upon him out of pure love and affection. After they had gnawed him all round, ate his bones bare, and whilst there was any marrow in them, sucked it carefully out, they left him cut down to the roots and withered; and so far from leaving him, or assisting him in their turns, would not so much as know or look upon him. This made him turn a common laborer; and, dressed in his skin garment, he tilled the earth for hire; ashamed to show himself in the city, and venting his rage against the ingratitude of those who, enriched, as they had been, by him, now proudly passed along without noticing him. But although such a character is not to be despised or neglected, no provocation, however great, can justify the violent and excessive invectives which he profanely bellowed forth from the bottom of Hymettus: "This spot of earth shall be my only habitation while I live; and when I am dead, my sepulchre. From this time forth, it is my fixed resolution to have no commerce or connection with mankind; but to despise them, and avoid it. I will pay no regard to acquaintance, friendship, pity or compassion. To pity the distressed, or to relieve the indigent, I shall consider as a weakness; nay, as a crime; my life, like that of the beast of the field, shall be spent in solitude; and Timon alone shall be Timon's friend. I will treat all beside as enemies and betrayers. To converse with them were profanation; to herd with them, impiety. Accursed be the day that brings them to my sight! I will look upon men, in short, as no more than so many statues of brass or stone; will make no truce, have no connection with them. My retreat shall be the boundary to separate us forever. Relations, friends and country, are empty names, respected by fools alone. Let Timon only be rich, and despise all the world

beside. Abhorring idle praise, and odious flattery, he shall be delighted with himself alone. Alone shall he sacrifice to the gods, feast alone, be his own neighbor, and his own companion. I am determined to be alone for life; and when I die, to place the crown upon my own head. The fairest name I would be distinguished by is that of misanthrope. I would be known and marked out by my asperity of manners; by moroseness, cruelty, anger and inhumanity. Were I to see a man perishing in the flames, and imploring me to extinguish them, I would throw pitch or oil into the fire to increase it; or, if the winter flood should overwhelm another, who with out-stretched hands should beg me to assist him, I would plunge him still deeper in the stream, that he might never rise again. Thus shall I be revenged of mankind. This is Timon's law, and this hath Timon ratified. I should be glad, however, that all might know how I abound in riches, because that I know will make them miserable."

The moral to be drawn from this dialogue of the celebrated Grecian philosopher, is the extreme danger to which the best and most benevolent characters may be exposed, by an indiscreet and unchecked indulgence of those painful feelings with which the baseness and ingratitude of the world are apt to wound the heart. There are, however, those who, without having received ill treatment from the world, foster in their bosoms a splenetic animosity against society, and secretly exult in the miseries and misfortunes of their fellow-creatures. Indulging themselves in the indolent habits of vice and vanity, and feeling a mortification in being disappointed of those rewards which virtuous industry can alone bestow, they seek a gloomy solitude to hide them from those lights which equally discover the errors of vice and the rectitude of virtue. Unable to attain glory for themselves, and incapable of enduring the luster of it in others, they creep into discontented retirement, from which they only emerge to envy the satis-

faction which accompanies real merit, to calumniate the character to which it belongs; and, like Satan, on the view of Paradise, "to see, undelighted, all delight."

There are, however, a class of a very different description, who, unoppressed by moody melancholy, untinctured by petulance or spleen, free from resentment, and replete with every generous thought and manly sentiment, calmly and contentedly retire from society, to enjoy, uninterruptedly, a happy communion with those high and enlightened minds, who have adorned by their actions the page of history, enlarged by their talents, the power of the human mind, and increased by their virtues, the happiness of mankind.

Retirement, however solitary it may be, when entered into with such a temper of mind, instead of creating or encouraging any hatred toward the species, raises our ideas of the possible dignity of human nature; disposes our hearts to feel, and our hands to relieve the misfortunes and necessities of our fellow-creatures; calls to our minds what high capacious powers lie folded up in man; and giving to every part of creation its finest forms, and richest colors, exhibits to our admiration its brightest glories and highest perfections, and induces us to transplant the charm which exists in our own bosoms into the bosoms of others.

* * * * The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south,
Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight
Of knowledge, half so tempting, or so fair,
As man to man: nor only where the smiles
Of love invite; nor only where the applause
Of cordial honor turns th' attentive eye
On virtue's graceful deeds; for since the course
Of things external acts in different ways
On human apprehension, as the hand
Of nature temper'd to a different frame
Peculiar minds, so haply where the powers
Of fancy neither lessen nor enlarge

The images of things, but paint, in all
Their genuine hues, the features which they wear
In nature, their opinions will be true,
And action right * * * *

A rational solitude, while it corrects the passions, improves the benevolent dispositions of the heart, increases the energies of the mind, and draws forth its latent powers. The Athenian orator, Callistratus, was to plead in the cause which the city of Oropus had depending; and the expectation of the public was greatly raised, both by the powers of the orator, which were then in the highest repute, and the importance of the trial. Demosthenes, hearing the governors and tutors agree among themselves to attend the trial, with much importunity prevailed on his master to take him to hear the pleaders. The master having some acquaintance with the officer who opened the court, got his young pupil a seat where he could hear the orators without being seen. Callistratus had great success, and his abilities were extremely admired. Demosthenes was fired with a spirit of emulation. When he saw with what distinction the orator was conducted home, and complimented by the people, he was struck still more with the power of that commanding eloquence which could carry all before it. From this time, therefore, he bade adieu to the other studies and exercises in which boys are engaged, and applied himself with great assiduity to declaiming, in hopes of being one day numbered among the orators. Satyrus, the player, who was an acquaintance of his, and to whom he lamented, after having been for some time called to the bar, "that though he had almost sacrificed his health to his studies, he could gain no favor with the people," promised to provide him with a remedy, if he would repeat some speech in Euripides or Sophocles. When Demosthenes had finished his recitation, Satyrus pronounced the same speech; and he did it with such propriety of action, and so much in character,

that it appeared to the orator quite a different passage; and Demosthenes, now understanding how much grace and dignity of action adds to the best oration, quitted the practice of composition, and, building a subterraneous study, repaired thither, for two or three months together, to form his action, and exercise his voice; and, by this means, formed that strong, impassioned and irresistible eloquence, which rendered him the glory of Athens, and the admiration of the world. Most of the exalted heroes, both of Greece and Rome, who devoted their attention to arts and to arms, acquired their chief excellency in their respective pursuits, by retiring from public observation, and cultivating their talents in the silence of solitude. St. Jerome, the most learned of all the Latin fathers, and son of the celebrated Eusebius, retired from the persecution of religious fury into an obscure and dreary desert in Syria, where he attained that rich, animated and sublime style of eloquence, which afterward so essentially contributed to support the rising church, and to enlighten, while it dazzled, the Christian world. The Druids, or ministers of religion among the ancient Gauls, Britons and Germans, retired in the intervals of their sacred functions, into awful forests and consecrated groves, where they passed their time in useful study and pious prayers; and while they acquired a complete knowledge of astrology, geometry, natural philosophy, politics, geography, morals and religion, rendered themselves happy and revered, and produced, by the wise instruction they were capable of affording to others, but particularly to youth, whose education they superintended, a bright succession of priests, legislators, counselors, judges, physicians, philosophers and tutors, to the respective nations in which they resided.

The modern Julian, the justly celebrated Frederic, king of Prussia, derived the highest advantages from his disguised retirement at Sans Souci, where he contrives the means of hurling inevitable destruction against the enemies of his

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country; listens to and relieves, with all the anxiety of a tender parent, the complaints and injuries of his meanest subjects; and recreates his excursive mind, by revising and correcting his immortal works for the admiration of posterity. Philosophy, poetry and politics, are the successive objects of his attention; and while he extends his views, and strengthens his understanding, by the study of ancient wisdom, he meliorates his heart by the delightful offerings of the muses, and increases the public strength by the wise and economical management of his resources. An awful silence, interrupted only by gentle airs, with which it is refreshed, pervades this delightful retreat. It was during the twilight of an autumnal evening that I visited this solemn scene. As I approached the apartment of this philosophic hero, I discovered him sitting, "nobly pensive," near a small table, from which shone the feeble rays of a common taper. No jealous sentinels, or ceremonious chamberlain impeded my progress, by scrutinizing inquiries of suspicion and mistrust; and I walked free and unchecked, except by respect and veneration, through the humble, unostentatious retreat of this extraordinary man. All characters, however high and illustrious they may be, who wish to attain a comprehensive view of things, and to shine in the highest spheres of virtue, must learn the rudiments of glory under the discipline of occasional retirement.

Solitude is frequently sought from an inclination to extend the knowledge of our talents and characters to those with whom we have no opportunity of being immediately acquainted; by preparing with greater care, and closer application, for the inspection of our cotemporaries, works worthy of the fame we are so anxious to acquire; but it seldom happens, alas! that those whose labors are most pregnant with instruction and delight, have received, from the age or country in which they lived, or even from the companions with whom they associated, the tribute of kindness or applause that is

justly due to their merits. The work which is stigmatized and traduced by the envy, ignorance, or local prejudices of a country, for whose delight and instruction it was particularly intended, frequently receives from the generous suffrages of impartial and unprejudiced strangers, the highest tribute of applause. Even those pretended friends, under whose auspices it was at first undertaken, upon whose advice it proceeded, and upon whose judgment it was at length published, no sooner hear its praises resounded from distant quarters, than they permit the poisoned shafts of calumny to fly unaverted, around the unsuspecting author, and warrant, by their silence, or assist, by their sneers, every insidious insinuation against his motives or his principles. This species of malevolence has been feelingly painted by the celebrated Petrarch. "No sooner had my fame," says he, "risen above the level of that which my cotemporaries had acquired, than every tongue dabbled and every pen was brandished against me; those who had before appeared to be my dearest friends, instantly became my deadliest enemies; the shafts of envy were industriously directed against me from every quarter; the critics to whom my poetry had before been much more familiar than their psalms or their prayers, seized, with malignant delight, every opportunity of traducing my morals; and those with whom I had been most intimate, were the most eager to injure my character, and destroy my fame." The student, however, ought not to be discouraged by this instance of envy and ingratitude. He who, conscious of his merit, learns to depend only on himself for support, will forget the injustice of the world, and draw his comfort and satisfaction from more infallible sources; like the truly benevolent and great, he will confer his favors on the public without the expectation of a return; and look with perfect indifference upon all the efforts his treacherous friends, or open enemies, are capable of using. He will, like Petrarch, appeal to posterity for his reward;

and the justice and generosity of future ages will preserve his fame to succeeding generations, hightened and adorned in proportion as it has been cotemporaneously mutilated and depressed.

The genius of many noble minded authors, particularly in Germany, are obscured and blighted by the thick and baneful fogs with which ignorance and envy overwhelm their works. Unable to withstand the incessant opposition they meet with, the powers of the mind grow feeble and relaxed; and many a fair design and virtuous pursuit is quitted in despair. How frequently does the desponding mind exclaim: "I feel my powers influenced by the affections of the heart. I am certainly incapable of doing to any individual an intentional injury, and I seek with anxiety every opportunity of doing good; but, alas! my motives are perverted, my designs misrepresented, my endeavors counteracted, my very person ridiculed, and my character defamed." There are, indeed, those whose courage and fortitude no opposition can damp, and no adversity subdue; whose firm and steady minds proceed with determined resolution to accomplish their designs in defiance of all resistance; and whose bright talents drive away the clouds of surrounding dullness, like fogs before the sun. Wieland, the happy Wieland, the adopted child of every muse, the favorite pupil of the graces, formed the powers of his extraordinary mind in a lonely and obscure retreat, the little village of Biberach, in the circle of Suabia, and thereby laid the foundation for that indisputable glory he has since attained. In solitude and silence he enriched his mind with all the stores that art and science could produce, and enabled himself to delight and instruct mankind, by adoring the sober mien of philosophy, and the lively smiles of wit, with the true spirit and irresistible charms of poetry. Retirement is the true parent of the great and good, and the kind nurse of nature's powers. It is to occasional retirement that politics owe the ablest states-

men, and philosophy the most celebrated sages. Did Aristotle, the peripatetic chief, compose his profound systems in the tumultuous court of Philip, or were the sublime theories of this master conceived among the noisy feasts of the tyrant Dionysius? No. The celebrated groves of the Academy, and the shades of Atarnya, bear witness of the important advantages which, in the opinion of both Plato and Aristotle, learning may derive from a rational retirement. These great men, like all others who preceded or have followed them, found in the ease and quietude of retirement the best means of forming their minds and extending their discoveries. The celebrated Leibnitz, to whom the world is deeply indebted, passed a great part of every year at an humble, quiet, retired, and beautiful villa which he possessed in the vicinity of Hanover.

To this catalogue of causes, conducing to a love of solitude, or hatred of society, we may add religion and fanaticism. The benign genius of religion leads the mind to a love of retirement from motives the highest, the most noble, and most really interesting, that can possibly be conceived, and produces the most perfect state of human happiness, by instilling into the heart the most virtuous propensities, and inspiring the finest energies; but fanaticism must ever be unhappy; for it proceeds from a subversion of nature itself, is formed on a perversion of reason, and a violation of truth; it is the vice of low and little understandings, is produced by an ignorance of human nature, a misapprehension of the Deity, and can not be practiced without a renunciation of real virtue. The passion of retirement, which a sense of religion enforces, rises in proportion as the heart is pure, and the mind correct; but the disposition to solitude, which fanaticism creates, arises from a wild, enthusiastic notion of inspiration, and increases in proportion as the heart is corrupt, and the mind deranged. Religion is the offspring of truth and love, and the parent of

benevolence, hope and joy; but the monster fanaticism is the child of discontent, and her followers are fear and sorrow. Religion is not confined to cells and closets, nor restrained to sullen retirement; these are the gloomy retreats of fanaticism, by which she endeavors to break those chains of benevolence and social affection that link the welfare of every individual with that of the whole. The greatest honor we can pay to the Author of our being, is such a cheerful behavior as discovers a mind satisfied with his dispensations. But this temper of mind is most likely to be attained by a rational retirement from the cares and pleasures of the world.

The disposition to solitude, however, of whatever kind or complexion it may be, is greatly influenced by the temper and constitution of the body, as well as by the frame and turn of the mind. The action of those causes proceeds, perhaps, by slow and insensible degrees, and varies in its form and manner in each individual; but though gradual or multiform, it at length reaches its point, and confirms the subject of it in habits of rational retreat, or unnatural solitude.

The motives which conduce to a love of solitude might, without doubt, be assigned to other causes; but a discussion of all the refined operations to which the mind may be exposed, and its bent and inclination determined, by the two great powers of sensation and reflection, would be more curious than useful. Relinquishing all inquiry into the primary or remote causes of human action to those who are fond of the useless subtleties of metaphysics, and confining our researches to those final or immediate causes which produce this disposition to enjoy the benefits of rational retirement, or encounter the mischiefs of irrational solitude, we shall proceed to show the mischiefs which may result from the one, in order that they may be contrasted with the advantages which, in the first part, we have already shown may be derived from the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

THE retirement which is not the result of cool and deliberate reason, so far from improving the feelings of the heart, or strengthening the powers of the mind, generally renders men less able to discharge the duties and endure the burdens of life. The wisest and best formed system of retirement is, indeed, surrounded with a variety of dangers, which are not, without the greatest care and caution, easily avoided. But in every species of total solitude, the perils are not only innumerable, but almost irresistible. It would, however, be erroneous to impute all the defects which may characterize such a recluse merely to the loneliness of his situation. There are original defects implanted by the hand of nature in every constitution, which no species of retirement or discipline can totally eradicate; there are certain vices, the seeds of which are so inherent, that no care, however great, can totally destroy. The advantages or disadvantages arising from retirement, will always be proportionate to the degrees of virtue and vice which prevail in the character of the recluse. It is certain that an occasional retreat from the business of the world will greatly improve the virtues and increase the happiness of him on whom nature has bestowed a sound understanding and a sensible heart; but when the heart is corrupt, the understanding weak, the imagination flighty, and the disposition depraved, solitude only tends to increase the evil, and to render the character more rank and vicious; for whatever be the culture, the produce will unavoidably partake of the quality of the

seeds and the nature of the soil; and solitude, by allowing a weak and wicked mind leisure to brood over its own suggestions, recreates and rears the mischief it was intended to prevent.

* * * "Where solitude, sad nurse of care,
To sickly musing gives the pensive mind,
There madness enters; and the dim-ey'd fiend,
Lorn melancholy, night and day provokes
Her own eternal wound. The sun grows pale;
A mournful visionary light o'er-spreads
The cheerful face of nature; earth becomes
A dreary desert; and the heavens frown above;
The various shapes of curs'd illusion rise;
Whate'er the wretched fear, creating fear
Forms out of nothing; and with monsters teems
Unknown in hell. The prostrate soul beneath
A load of huge imagination heaves;
And all the horrors that the guilty feel,
With anxious flutterings wake the guilty breast.
From other cares absolv'd, the busy mind
Finds in itself a theme to pore upon;
And finds it miserable, or makes it so."

To enable the mind, however, to form an accurate judgment of the probable consequences of solitude, it is, perhaps, necessary to have seen instances both of its advantageous and detrimental effects. The consequences vary with the subject on which it operates; and the same species of solitude which to one character would be injurious, will prove to another of the highest benefit and advantage. The same person, indeed, may, at different periods; as his disposition changes, experience, under similar circumstances of retirement, very different effects. Certain, however, it is, that an occasional retreat from the tumultuous intercourses of society, or a judicious and well arranged retirement, can not be prejudicial. To have pointed out the train of virtues it is capable of pro-

ducing, and to have been silent upon the black catalogue of vices that may result from extreme seclusion, would have been the more pleasing task; but I have undertaken to draw the character of solitude impartially, and must therefore point out its possible defects.

Man in a state of solitary indolence and inactivity, sinks, by degrees, like stagnant water, into impurity and corruption. The body suffers with the mind's decay. It is more fatal than excess of action. It is a malady that renders every hope of recovery vain and visionary. To sink from action into rest, is only indulging the common course of nature; but to rise from long continued indolence to voluntary activity, is extremely difficult, and almost impracticable. A celebrated poet has finely described this class of unhappy beings in the following lines:

> "Then look'd, and saw a lazy lolling sort,
> Unseen at church, at senate, or at court,
> Of ever-listless loiterers, that attend
> No cause, no trust, no duty, and no friend.
> Thee, too, my Paridel! she mark'd thee there,
> Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
> And heard the everlasting yawn confess
> The pains and penalties of idleness.

To preserve the proper strength, both of the body and the mind, labor must be regularly and seasonably mingled with rest. Each of them require their suited exercise and relaxations. Philosophers who aim at the attainment of every superior excellency, do not indulge themselves in ease, and securely and indolently wait for the cruelties of fortune to attack them in their retirement; but for fear she should surprise them in the state of inexperienced and raw soldiers, undisciplined for the battle, they sally out to meet her, and put themselves into regular training, and even upon the proof of hardships. Those only who observe a proper interchange

of exercise and rest, can expect to enjoy health of body, or cheerfulness of mind. It is the only means by which the economy of the human frame can be regularly preserved.

He, therefore, who does not possess sufficient activity to keep the body and mind in proper exercise; he who is unacquainted with the art of varying his amusements, of changing the subjects of his contemplation, and of finding within himself all the materials of enjoyment, will soon feel solitude not only burdensome, but insupportable. To such a character, solitude will not only be disagreeable, but dangerous; for the moment the temporary passion which draws him from society has subsided, he will sink into languor and indifference; and this temper is always unfavorable to moral sentiment. The world, perhaps, with all its disadvantages, is less likely to be injurious to such a man, than the calm and silent shades of unenjoyed retirement.

Solitude also, particularly when carried to an extreme, is apt to render the character of the recluse rigid, austere and inflexible, and, of course, unsuited to the enjoyments of society. The notions he contracts are as singular and abstracted as his situation; he adheres to them with inflexible pertinacity; his mind moves only in the accustomed track; he cherishes his preconceived errors and prejudices with fond attachment, and despises those whose sentiments are contrary to his own. A promiscuous intercourse with society has the effect of rendering the mind docile, and his judgment of men and things correct; for, in the world, every subject is closely examined, every question critically discussed; and, while the spirit of controversy and opposition elicits truth, the mind is led into a train of rational investigation, and its powers strengthened and enlarged; but the mind of the recluse being uninterruptedly confined to its own course of reasoning, and to the habit of viewing objects on one side, it is unable to appreciate the respective weights which different arguments

may deserve, or to judge in doubtful cases, on which side truth is most likely to be found. A commixture of different opinions, on any particular subject, provokes a free and liberal discussion of it, an advantage which the prepossession engendered by solitude uniformly prevents.

Solitude, while it establishes a dangerous confidence in the powers and opinions of its votaries, not only fastens on the characters the errors and imperfections it has produced and fostered, but recommends them strongly to their esteem. How frequently do we observe, even in persons of rank and fortune, who reside continually on their own estates, a haughty manner and arbitrary disposition, totally incompatible with that candid conduct, that open-minded behavior, that condescending urbanity, that free spirit, which mark the character of the polite and liberal-minded gentleman, and render him the veneration and delight of all around him! "Obstinacy and pride," says Plato, "are the inevitable consequences of a solitary life," and the frequency of the fact certainly justifies the observation. Retired, secluded characters, having no opportunity of encountering the opinions of others, or of listening to any other judgment than their own, establish a species of tyranny over their understandings, and check that free excursion of the intellect which the discovery of truth requires. They reject, with disdain, the close investigations of logic, and repel all attempts to examine their arguments, and expose their fallacies. Their preconceived opinions, which they dignify with the appellation of settled truths, and mistake for indisputable axioms, have infixed themselves so deeply in their minds, that they can not endure the idea of their being rooted out or removed; and they are fearful of submitting them to the test of controversy, only because they were originally received without the due examination, and have been confirmed by the implicit consent and approbation of their inferiors and dependants.

Solitude also, even the solitude which poets and philoso-

phers have so feelingly described as blissful and beneficial, has frequently proved injurious to its delighted votaries. Men of letters are, in general, too inattentive to those easy and captivating manners which give such high spirit to the address, and splendid decoration to the characters, of well-bred men. They seldom qualify the awkwardness of scholastic habits by a free and intimate intercourse either with the world or with each other; but being secluded from society, and engaged in abstracted pursuits, adopt a pedantic phraseology, an unaccommodating address, formal notions, and a partial attachment to their recondite pursuits. The common topics of conversation, and usual entertainment of company, they treat with high, but unjustifiable disdain; and, blinded by fogs of pride, and ideal superiority, are rendered incapable of discerning their errors.

The correction of this disposition in authors has been thought of so much importance to the interests of morals, and to the manners of the rising generation, that scholars in general have been exhorted, in the highest strains of eloquence, by one of the most powerful preachers of Germany, from the pulpit of the politest city in the empire, to guard with unceasing vigilence against those defects which are so apt to mingle with the habits of the profession, and which tend to sully the brightness of their characters. The orator invokes them to shake off that distant demeanor, that unsocial reserve, that supercilious behavior and almost express contempt, from which few of them are free, and which most of them practice when in unlettered company; and to treat their fellow-citizens, however inferior they may be in erudition and scholastic knowledge, with affability and attention; to listen to their conversation with politeness; to regard their errors with lenity; to view their failings with compassion, and their defects with liberality; to lead them into the paths of truth and science by mild persuasion; to lure them to knowledge by

gentle means, and, by reducing their conversation and subjects of discourse to a level with the unlettered understandings of their auditors, to please the heart while they instruct the mind.

Good sense and learning may esteem obtain;
Humor and wit a laugh, if rightly ta'en:
Fair virtue admiration may impart;
But 'tis good nature only wins the heart.
It molds the body to an easy grace,
And brightens every feature of the face:
It smooths th' unpolish'd tongue with eloquence,
And adds persuasion to the finest sense.

Learning and good sense, indeed, to whatever degree they may be possessed, can only render the possessor happy in proportion as he employs them to increase the happiness of others. To effect this, he must occasionally endure the jokes of dullness without petulance, and listen with complacency to the observations of ignorance, but, above all, he must carefully avoid all inclination to exhibit his own superiority, and to shine at the expense of others.

Learning and wisdom, indeed, however they may be confounded by arrogant and self-conceited scholars, are in no respect synonymous terms; but, on the contrary, are not unfrequently quite at variance with each other. The high admiration which scholars are too apt to entertain of the excellency of their own talents, and the vast importance they generally ascribe to their own characters and merit, instead of producing that sound judgment upon men and things which constitutes true wisdom, only engenders an effervescence in the imagination, the effect of which is, in general, the most frothy folly. Many of those who thus pride themselves on the pursuits of literature, having nothing to boast of but an indefatigable attention to some idle and unprofitable study; a study which, perhaps, only tends to contract the feelings of

the heart, and impoverish the powers of the mind. True wisdom and genuine virtue are the produce of those enlarged views which arise from a general and comprehensive knowledge both of books and men; but scholars who confine their attention entirely to books, and feel no interest or concern for the world, despise every object that does not lie within the range of their respective studies. By poring over obsolete works, they acquire sentiments quite foreign to the manners of the age in which we live; form opinions as ridiculous as they are unfashionable; fabricate systems incomprehensible to the rest of mankind; and maintain arguments so offensive and absurd, that whenever they venture to display their acquirements in society, they are, like the bird of night, hooted back with derision into their daily obscurity. Many studious characters are so puffed up by arrogance, presumption, self-conceit and vanity that they can scarcely speak upon any subject without hurting the feelings of their friends, and giving cause of triumph to their enemies. The counsel and instruction they effect to give is so mixed with ostentatious pedantry, that they destroy the very end they wish to promote; and, instead of acquiring honorable approbation, cover themselves with merited disgrace. Plato, the illustrious chief of the academic set of Athenian philosophers, was so totally free from this vice of inferior minds, that it was impossible to discover in him by ordinary and casual conversation, that sublime imagination and almost divine intellect, which rendered him the idol of his age, and the admiration of succeeding generations. On his return from Syracuse, to which place he had been invited by Dionysius the younger, he visited Olympia, to be present at the performance of the Olympic games; and he was placed on the seat appropriated to foreigners of the highest distinction, but to whom he was not personally known. Some of them were so pleased with the ease, politeness, wisdom and vivacity of his conversation, that they accompanied him to

Athens, and, on their arrival in that city, requested him to procure them an interview with Plato. But how pleasing and satisfactory was their surprise, when, on his replying with a smile, "*I am the person whom you wish to see,*" they discovered that this affable and entertaining companion, with whom they had traveled without discerning his excellency, was the most learned and profound philosopher at that time existing in the world! The studious and retired life of this extraordinary character had not decreased his urbanity and politeness, nor deprived him of the exercise of those easy and seducing manners which so entirely engage the affection and win the heart. He wisely prevented seclusion from robbing him of that amenity and unassuming ease so necessary to the enjoyment of society. Like those two eminent philosophers of the present day, the wise Mendelsohm and the amiable Garve, he derived from solitude all the benefits it is capable of conferring, without suffering any of those injuries which it too frequently inflicts on less powerful minds.

Culpable, however, as studious characters in general are, by neglecting to cultivate that social address, and to observe that civility of manners, and urbane attention, which an intercourse not only with the world, but even with private society, so indispensably requires, certain it is, that men of fashion expect from them a more refined good breeding, and a nicer attention to the forms of politeness, than all their endeavors can produce. The fashionable world, indeed, are blamable for their constant attempts to deride the awkwardness of their more erudite and abstracted companions. The severity with which they treat the defective manners of a scholastic visitor, is a violation of the first rules of true politeness, which consist entirely of a happy combination of good sense and good nature, both of which dictate a different conduct, and induce rather a friendly concealment, than a triumphant exposure of such venial failings. The inexperienced scholastic is entitled to

indulgence, for he can not be expected nicely to practice customs which he has had no opportunity to learn. To the eye of polished life, his austerity, his reserve, his mistakes, his indecorums, may, perhaps, appear ridiculous; but to expose him to derision on this subject, is destructive to the general interests of society, inasmuch as it tends to repress and damp endeavors to please. How is it possible that men who devote the greater portion of their time to the solitary and abstracted pursuits of literature, can possess that promptitude of thought, that variety of expression, those easy manners, and that varying humor, which prevail so agreeably in mixed society, and which can only be acquired by a constant intercourse with the world? It was not only cruel, but unjust, of the Sweedish courtiers to divert themselves with the confusion and embarrassments into which Miebom and Naude, two celebrated writers on the music and dances of the ancients, were thrown, when the celebrated Christina desired the one to sing and the other to dance in public, for the entertainment of the court. Still less excusable were those imps of fashion in France, who exposed the celebrated mathematician, Nicole, to the derision of a large company, for the misapplication of a word. A fashionable female at Paris, having heard that Nicole, who had then lately written a profound and highly approved treaties on the doctrine of curves, was greatly celebrated in all the circles of science, and affecting to be thought the patroness and intimate of all persons of distinguished merit, sent him such an invitation to one of her parties that he could not refuse to accept of. The abstracted geometrician, who had never before been present at an assembly of the kind, received the civilities of his fair hostess, and her illustrious friends, with all the awkwardness and confusion which such a scene must naturally create. After passing an uncomfortable evening, in answering the observations of those who addressed him, in which he experienced much greater difficulties than he would have found in solving

the most intricate problem, he prepared to take his leave, and pouring out a profusion of declarations to the lady of the house, of the grateful sense he entertained of the high honor she had conferred on him, by her generous invitation, distinguishing attention, polite regard, and extraordinary civility, rose to the climax of his compliments, by assuring her, that the *lovely little eyes of his fair entertainer had made an impression which never could be erased from his breast*, and immediately departed. But a kind friend, who was accompanying him home, whispering in his ear, as they were passing the stairs, that he had paid the lady a very ill compliment, by telling her that her eyes were little, for that little eyes were universally understood by the whole sex to be a great defect. Nicole, mortified to an extreme by the mistake he had thus innocently made, and resolving to apologize to the lady whom he conceived he had offended, returned abruptly to the company, and entreated her, with great humility, to pardon the error into which his confusion had betrayed him, of imputing anything like *littleness* to so high, so elegant, so distinguished a character, declaring that he had never beheld *such fine large eyes, such fine large lips, such fine large hands, or so fine and large a person altogether*, in the whole course of his life!

The professional pursuits of students confine them during the early periods of life, to retirement and seclusion, and prevent them, in general, from attempting to mix in the society of the world, until age, or professional habits, have rendered them unfit for the scene. Discouraged by the neglect they experience, and by the ridicule to which they are exposed, on their first introduction into active life, from persevering in their attempts to shake off the uncouth manner they have acquired, they immediately shrink from the displeasing prospect into their original obscurity, in despair of ever attaining the talents necessary to render them agreeable to the elegant and gay. There are, indeed, some men, who, on attempting

to change the calm and rational enjoyments of a retired and studious life for the more lively and loquacious pleasures of public society, perceive the manners and maxims of the world so repugnant to their principles, and so disagreeable to their taste and inclinations, that they instantly abandon society, and, renouncing all future attempts to enter into its vortex, calmly and contentedly return to their beloved retreat, under an idea that it is wrong for persons of such different dispositions to intermix or invade the provinces of each other. There are also many studious characters who avoid society, under an idea that they have transferred their whole minds into their own compositions; that they have exhausted all that they possessed of either instruction or entertainment; and that they would, like empty bottles, or squeezed oranges, be thrown aside with disregard, and, perhaps, with contempt, as persons no longer capable of contributing to companionable pleasures. But there are others, of sounder sense, and better judgment, who gladly relinquish the noisy assemblies of public life, and joyfully retire to the sweet and tranquil scenes of rural solitude, because they seldom meet among the candidates for public approbation, a single individual capable of enjoying a just thought, or making a rational reflection; but, on the contrary, have to encounter a host of vain, frivolous pretenders to wit and learning, who herd together, like the anarchs of insurrection, to oppose, with noise and violence, the progress of truth, and the exertions of reason.

Sentiments like these too frequently banish from the circles of society characters of useful knowledge and of distinguished genius, and from whose endowments mankind might receive both instruction and delight. The loss, in such a case, to the individual is, perhaps, trifling; his comforts may possibly be increased by his seclusion; but the interests of truth and good sense are thereby considerably injured; for the mind of man, however powerful and informed it may be in itself, can

not employ its energies and acquisitions with the same advantage and effect, as when it is whetted by a collision with other minds, and polished by the manners of the world. An acquaintance with the living characters and manners of the world teaches the mind to direct its powers to the proper and most useful points; exhibits the means and furnishes the instruments, by which the best exertions of virtue can attain her ends; gives morals their brightest color, taste its highest refinement, and truth its fairest objects. The wisest and best philosophers have acknowledged the obligations they were under to society for the knowledge they acquired in its extensive, though dangerous school, and have strongly recommended the study of mankind, by viewing all the various classes with a discriminating eye, as the best means of becoming acquainted with the beauties of *virtue*, and the deformities of *vice*, and, of course, as the best means of discovering the true road to earthly happiness; for—

Virtue, immortal virtue! born to please,
The child of nature and the source of ease,
Bids every bliss on human life attend;
To every rank a kind and faithful friend;
Inspirits nature 'midst the scenes of toil,
Smooths languor's cheek, and bids fell want recoil;
Shines from the mitre with unsullied rays,
Glares on the crest, and gives the star to blaze;
Supports distinction, spreads ambition's wings,
Forms saints of queens, and demi-gods of kings;
O'er grief, oppression, envy, scorn, prevails,
And makes a cottage greater than Versailles.

A free, open, unconstrained intercourse with mankind has also the advantage of reconciling us to the peculiarities of others, and of teaching us the important lesson how to accommodate our minds and manners to such principles, opinions and dispositions, as may differ from our own. The learned and enlightened can not maintain an intercourse with the illite-

rate, without exercising an extraordinary degree of patience, conceding many points which appear unnatural, and forbearing to feel those little vexations so adherent to characters who have lived in retirement. The philosopher, in order to teach virtue to the world with any hope of success, must humor its vices to a certain degree and sometimes even adopt the follies he intends to destroy. To inculcate wisdom, it is necessary to follow the examples of Socrates and Wieland, and, separating from morals all that is harsh, repulsive and anti-social, adopt only the kind and complacent tenets of the science. A German author of the present day, whom I glory to call both my countryman and my friend, observes, with the sagacity and discrimination of a critic, in his "Remarks on the Writings and Genius of Franklin," that the compositions of that great and extraordinary character are totally free from that pomp of style and parade of erudition, which so frequently disfigure the writings of other authors, and defeat their intended effect. The pen of Franklin renders the most abstract principles easy and familiar. He conveys his instructions in pleasing narrations, lively adventures, or humorous observations; and while his manner wins upon the heart, by the friendly interest he appears to take in the concerns of mankind, his matter instills into his mind the soundest principles of morals and good policy. He makes fancy the handmaid to reason in her researches into science, and penetrates the understanding through the medium of the affections. A secret charm pervades every part of his works. He rivets the attention by the strength of his observations, and relieves it by the variety of pleasing images with which he embellishes his subject. The perspicuity of his style, and the equally easy and eloquent turn of his periods, give life and energy to his thoughts; and while the reader feels his heart bounding with delight, he finds his mind impregnated with instruction. These high advantages resulted entirely from his having studied the world, and gained an accurate knowledge

of mankind. An author, indeed, may acquire an extraordinary fund of knowledge in solitude, but it is in society alone that he can learn how to render it useful. Before he can instruct the world, he must be enabled to view its fooleries and vices with calm inspection; to contemplate them without anger, as the unavoidable consequences of human infirmity; to treat them with tenderness; and to avoid exasperating the feelings of those whose depravity he is attempting to correct. A moral censor, whose disposition is kind and benevolent, never suffers his superior virtue, knowledge or talents, however great they may be, to offend the feelings of others; but, like Socrates, he will appear as if he were receiving himself the instruction he is imparting. It is a fine observation of the celebrated Goethe, that kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together; those who have had the happiness to converse with that extraordinary man, must have perceived the anxiety with which he endeavors to temper the strength of his genius by the mildness and amenity of his conversation.

Men of letters, however awkward the habits of seclusion may have rendered them, would, I am convinced, be, in general, if not always, treated with great politeness and attention, if they would be careful to treat others with the common candor which humanity requires, and with that indulgence and affability which true liberality of sentiment will ever dictate; but how few, alas! are there who, by complacency and condescension, entitle themselves to the kindness and civility of which they stand so much in need, and so arrogantly expect. How is it possible for those who are vigilantly anxious to depress the rising merit of others, ever to gain their friendship or esteem? Friendship can only be acquired by an open, sincere, liberal and manly conduct; but he whose breast is filled with envy and jealousy, who cautiously examines, before he speaks, every sentiment and feeling, lest his tongue shoul betray the meanness of his heart, and the poverty of his mind;

who seizes every light indiscretion or trifling error, that may inadvertently escape from his companions; who silently repines at every excellency, both moral and intellectual, which they may discover; who, even when surrounded by those who wish him well, continues, with guarded circumspection, and suspicious caution, to weigh the motives of their actions and conversation, as if he were surrounded by the bitterest enemies, must be utterly incapable of esteeming others, or being esteemed himself; and to suppose that the generous flame of friendship, that holy fire, which, under the deepest adversity, so comfortably warms and cheers the heart, can ever spring up from such cold materials, and ashy embers, would be extravagant and ridiculous.

The delight which the heart experiences in pouring forth the fullness of its feelings, with honest confidence, into the bosom of a faithful friend, is permanent and unbounded. The pleasures which spring from the acquisition of fame, whether resulting from the generous voice of an approving public, or extorted from the reluctant tongues of envious rivals and cotemporaries, will bear no comparison with those which thrill through the exulting bosom of him who can justly exclaim: "To the heart of this unhappy man I have given returning hopes, and made him look forward with confidence to the enjoyment of peace; to his wounded spirit I have imparted the balm of comfort and tranquillity; and from the bleeding bosom of my friend have driven despair!" But to perform such offices as these, it is indispensably necessary that we should have recommended ourselves to the confidence, and have gained the affections of those we intend to serve. This great and necessary property, however, those who live secluded lives very seldom possess; but, much as they may in general disdain to practice this high virtue, it is necessary that they should know that it tends more to ennoble the sentiments of the mind, and to raise the feelings of the heart, than their most success-

ful researches to discover something before unheard of in the regions of science, and which they pursue with as much avidity as if truth were liable to decay, unless sustained by the aid of novelty.

It is justly and beautifully said by one of the apocryphal writers, that *a faithful friend is the medicine of life.* A variety of occasions happen, when, to pour forth the heart to one whom we love and trust, is the chief comfort, perhaps, the only relief we can enjoy. Miserable is he who, shut up within the narrow inclosure of selfish interest, has no person to whom he can at all times with full confidence, expand his soul. But he who can only feel an affection for such as listen continually to the suggestions of vanity, as applaud indiscriminately the imaginary prodigies of his wit, or never contradict the egotism of his opinions, is totally unfit for friendship, and utterly unworthy of respect. It is men of learning and of retired habits, who are most likely to adopt this disengaging disposition. There are, I am sorry to say it, many men distinguished in the paths of science, who affect to possess the most refined sensibility, and whose tongues are continually proclaiming the virtues of benevolence, but who, when they are called upon to practice those virtues in behalf of some distressed companion, turn a deaf ear to the appeal, form some poor excuse, or not interfering, and, if pressed to come forward with some promised assistance, deny to afford it, because the unhappy sufferer has neglected to approve of some extravagant conjecture, or to adopt all the visionary notions and Utopian systems they may have framed. He who neglects to perform the common charities of life, because his idle vanity may have been offended by the neglect or indifference of his companions, will never find, and can not become a real friend. There are also an inferior order of fops in literature (if any order can be inferior to that which I have last described), who carry with them wherever they go, a collection of their latest composi-

tions, and by importunately reading them to every one they meet, and expecting an unreserved approbation of their merits, render themselves so unpleasantly troublesome on all occasions, that, instead of conciliating the least regard or esteem, their very approach is dreaded as much as a pestilence or a famine. Every man of real genius will shun this false ambition of gratifying vanity by forced applause; because he will immediately perceive, that instead of gaining the hearts of his auditors, he only exposes himself to the ridicule, and loses all chance of their esteem.

The disadvantages, however, which studious characters have been described to experience from habits of solitary seclusion, and by neglecting the manners of society, must not be indiscriminately applied. It is the morose and surly pedant, who sits silently in his solitary study, and endeavors to enforce a character for genius in opposition to nature, who adopts the mean and unworthy arts of jealousy, suspicion and dishonest praise. Far different the calm, happy and honorable life of him who, devoted to the cultivation of a strong understanding, and the improvement of a feeling heart, is enabled, by his application and genius, to direct the taste of the age by his liberality of spirit, to look on his equals without jealousy and his superiors with admiration; and, by his benevolence, to feel for the multitude he instructs, indulgence and affection; who, relying on the real greatness of his temper, makes no attempt to increase his importance by low raillery or unfounded satire; whose firm temper never sinks into supine indolence, or groveling melancholy; who only considers his profession as the means of meliorating mankind; who perseveres in the cause of truth with cheerful rectitude and virtuous dignity; whose intellectual resources satisfactorily supply the absence of society; whose capacious mind enables him to increase his stores of useful knowledge; whose discriminating powers enable him to elucidate the subject he explores; who feels as

great a delight in promoting the beneficial discoveries of others, as in executing his own; and who regards his professional cotemporaries, not as jealous rivals, but as generous friends, striving to emulate each other in the noble pursuits of science, and in the laudable task of endeavoring to improve the morals of mankind.

Characters of this description, equally venerable and happy, are numerous in Europe, both within and without the shades of academic bowers, and afford examples which, notwithstanding the tribe of errors and absurdities solitude occasionally engenders, should induce men of worldly pleasures to repress the antipathies they are in general inclined to feel against persons of studious and retired lives.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE ON THE IMAGINATION.

THE powers of imagination are great; and the effects produced by them, under certain circumstances, upon the minds of men of warm and sensible tempers, extraordinary and surprising. Multitudes have been induced, by perturbed imaginations to abandon the gay and cheerful haunts of men, and to seek in dreary desolation, comfort and repose. To such extremes has this faculty, when distorted, hurried its unhappy subjects, that they have endured the severest mortification, denied themselves the common benefits of nature, exposed themselves to the keenest edge of winter's cold, and the most scorching rays of summer's heat, and indulged their distempered fancies in the wildest chimeras. These dreadful effects appear, on a first view, to be owing to some supernatural cause, and they agitate our senses, and confuse the understanding, as phenomena beyond the comprehension of reason; but the wonder vanishes when the cause is coolly and carefully explored; and the extravagancies are traced up to their real source, the natural organization of man. The wild ideas of the hermit Anthony, who, in his gloomy retreat, fancied that Beelzebub appeared to him in the form of a beautiful female, to torture his senses and disturb his repose, originated in his natural character and disposition. His distempered fancy conjured up a fiend, which, in fact, existed in his unsubdued passions and incontinent desires.

* * * * From the enchanting cup
Which fancy holds to all, the unwary thirst
Of youth oft swallows a Circæan draught;

That sheds a baleful tincture o'er the eye
Of reason, till no longer he discerns
And only lives to err; then revel forth
A furious band, that spurn him from the throne,
And all is uproar. Hence the fever'd heart
Pants with delirious hope for tinsel charms.

Solitude excites and strengthens the powers of the imagination to an uncommon degree, and thereby enfeebles the effect of the controlling powers of reason. The office of the latter faculty of the mind is to examine with nice discernment and scrupulous attention, to compare the several properties of thoughts and things with each other, and to acquire, by cool and deliberate investigation, correct ideas of their combinations and effects. The exercise of their power suspends the vehemence of action, and abates the ardor of desire; but fancy performs her airy excursions upon light and vagrant wings, and flying around her objects without examination, embraces every pleasing image with increasing delight. Judgment separates and associates the ideas the mind has gained by sensation and reflection, and by determining their agreement or disagreement, searches after truth through the medium of probability; but the imagination employs itself in raising unsubstantial images, and portraying the form of things unknown in nature, and foreign to truth. It has, indeed, like memory, the power of reviving in the mind the ideas which, after having been imprinted there, have disappeared; but it differs from that faculty by altering, enlarging, diversifying, and frequently distorting the subjects of its power.

It bodies forth the form of things unknown,
And gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name.

But the irregular and wild desires which seize upon the mind through the avenues of an untamed fancy and disordered imagination, are not exclusively the produce of solitude. The

choice of wisdom or folly is offered to us in all places, and under every circumstance; but the mind of man is unhappily prone to that which is least worthy of it. I shall therefore endeavor to show, by some general observations, in what instances solitude is most likely to create those flights of imagination which mislead the mind and corrupt the heart.

Imagination is said to be the simple apprehension of corporeal objects when they are absent; which absence of the object it contemplates, distinguishes this faculty from *sensation*, and has occasioned some metaphysicians to call it *recorded sensation*. Upon the due regulation and proper management of this great and extraordinary power of the mind, depends, in a great measure, the happiness or misery of life. It ought to consist of a happy combination of those ideas we receive through the organs of bodily sense, and those which we derive from the faculties of moral perception; but it too frequently consists of a capricious and ill-formed mixture of heterogeneous images, which, though true in themselves, are false in the way they are applied. Thus a person, the circulation of whose blood in any particular member is suddenly stopped, *imagines* that needles are pricking the disordered part. The sensation in this case is real, but the conclusion from it is fallacious. So in every mental illusion, imagination, when she first begins to exercise her powers, seizes on some fact, of the real nature of which the mind has but an obscure idea, and for want of tracing it through all its connections and dependencies, misleads reason into the darkest paths of error. The wild conjectures and extravagant opinions which have issued from this source are innumerable. The imagination receives every impulse with eagerness, while the passions crowd around her splendid throne, obedient to her dictates. They act, indeed, reciprocally on each other. The imagination pours a concourse of contrary ideas into the mind, and easily disregards or reconciles their incongruities. The voice of the calm

inquirer, reason, is incapable of being heard amidst the tumult; and the favorite image is animated and enlarged by the glowing fire of the passions. No power remains to control or regulate, much less to subdue, this mental ray, which inflames the whole soul, and exalts it into the fervor of enthusiasm, hurries it into the extravagance of superstition; or precipitates it into the furious phrenzies of fanaticism—

> The powerful tumult reigns in every part,
> Pants in the breast, and swells the rising heart.

Enthusiasm is that ecstasy of the mind, that lively transport of the soul, which is excited by the pursuit or contemplation of some great and noble object, the novelty of which awakens attention, the truth of which fixes the understanding, and the grandeur of which, by firing the fancy, engages the aid of every passion, and prompts the mind to the highest undertakings. A just and rightly formed enthusiasm is founded in reason, and supported by nature, and carries the mind above its ordinary level, into the unexplored regions of art and science. The rational enthusiast, indeed, rises to an elevation so far above the distinct view of vulgar eyes, that common understandings are apt to treat him either with blind admiration, or cool contempt, only because they are incapable of comprehending his real character; and while some bow to him as an extraordinary genius, others rail at him as an unhappy lunatic. The powers of enthusiasm, however, when founded upon proper principles, so strengthen and invigorate the faculties of the mind, as to enable it to resist danger undismayed, and to surmount difficulties that appear irresistible Those, indeed, who have possessed themselves of this power to any extraordinary degree, have been considered as *inspired*, and their great achievements conceived to have been directed by councils, and sustained by energies of a divine or supermundane nature. Certain it is, that we owe to the spirit of

enthusiasm whatever is great in art, sublime in science, or noble in the human character; and the elegant and philosophic Lord Shaftsbury, while he ridicules the absurdities of this wonderfully powerful and extensive quality, admits that it is impossible to forbear ascribing to it whatever is greatly performed by heroes, statesmen, poets, orators, and even philosophers themselves; and who that is not contented to wallow in the mire of gross sensuality, would not quit the noisy scenes of tumultuous dissipation, and repair with joy and gladness to solitary shades, to the bower of tranquillity, and the fountain of peace, to majestic forests, and to verdant groves, to acquire this necessary ingredient to perfect excellence? Who would not willingly pierce the pensive gloom, or dwell among the brighter glories of the golden age, to acquire by a warm and glowing, but correct and chaste contemplation of the beautiful and sublime works of nature, these ravishing sensations, and gain this noble fervor of the imagination? A proper study of the works of nature amidst the romantic scenery of sylvan solitude, is certainly the most likely means of inspiring the mind with true enthusiasm, and leading genius to her most exalted hights; but the attempt is dangerous. There are few men in whose minds airy notions do not sometimes tyrannize. "To indulge the power of fiction," says a celebrated writer, "and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone, we are not always busy; the labor of excogitation is too violent to last long; the ardor of inquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and

confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, can not bestow. In time some particular train of ideas fixes the attention; all other intellectual gratifications are rejected; the mind in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favorite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotic; then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten on the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish. This is one of the dangers of solitude.

These observations lead us to consider the character of the fanatical visionary, who feels, like the happy enthusiast, the same agitation of passion, and the same inflammation of mind; but as the feelings of one are founded upon knowledge, truth and nature, so the feelings of the other are the result of ignorance and error, and all the glittering meteors of his brain the effects of imposture and deception. Of this species of enthusiasm, Mr Locke gives the following description: "In all ages men in whom melancholy has mixed with devotion, or whose conceit of themselves has raised them into an opinion of a greater familiarity with God, and a nearer admittance to his favors, than is afforded to others, have often flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communication with his divine spirit. Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon the fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and whatever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed; it is a commission from above, and they can not err in executing it. This species of enthusiasm, though arising

from the conceit of a warm and overweening brain, works, when it once gets footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men than either reason, revelation, or both together; men being forwardly obedient to all the impulses they receive from themselves." The fantastic images, indeed, which the wildness of his imagination creates, subdues his reason, and destroys the best affections of his heart, while his passions take the part of their furious assailants, and render him the victim of his visionary conceptions. It is not, however, from sources of fanatical devotion, or irrational solitude, that this vicious species of enthusiasm alone arises. The follies of faquiers, the extravagance of orgaists, the absurdities of hermits, and the mummery of monks, are not more enthusiastically injurious to the true interests of mankind, or more pregnant with all the calamitous effects of this baleful vice, than those unprincipled systems of politics and morals which have been of late years obtruded on the world, and in which good sense is sacrificed, and true science disgraced.

The growth of fanaticism, whether moral, political, religious or scientific, is not confined exclusively to any age or country; the seeds of it have been but too plentifully sown in all the regions of the earth; and it is almost equally baneful and injurious in whatever soil they spring. Every bold, turbulent, and intriguing spirit, who has sufficient artifice to inflame the passions of the inconstant multitude, the moment he calls the demon of fanaticism to his aid, becomes troublesome, and frequently dangerous to the government under which he lives. Even the affectation of this powerful, but pernicious quality, is able to produce fermentations highly detrimental to the peace of society. In the very metropolis of Great Britain, and among the enlightened inhabitants of that kingdom, Lord George Gordon, in the present age, was enabled, by assuming the hypocritical appearance of piety, and standing forth as a champion of a religious sect, to convulse the nation, and en-

danger its safety. In the twenty-first year of the reign of his Britannic Majesty, the present powerful and illustrious King George III, an act of parliament was passed to relieve the Roman Catholics residing in England from the penalties and disabilities which had been imposed on them at the revolution. An extension of the same relief to the Catholics of Scotland was also said to be intended by parliament. The report spread an immediate alarm throughout the country; societies were formed for the defense of the Protestant faith; committees appointed, books dispersed, and, in short, every method taken to inflame the zeal of the people. These attempts being totally neglected by the government, and but feebly resisted by the more liberal minded in the country, produced all their effects. A furious spirit of bigotry and persecution soon showed itself, and broke out into the most outrageous acts of violence against the Papists at Edinburg, Glasgow, and elsewhere; but, as government did not think it advisable to repress this spirit by force, the just and benevolent intentions of the legislature were laid aside. The successful resistance of the zealots in Scotland to any relaxation of the penal laws against the Papists, seems to have given the first rise to the Protestant Association in England; for about the same time bills were dispersed, and advertisements inserted in the newspapers, inviting those who wished well to the cause to unite under that title; and Lord George Gordon, who had been active at the head of the malcontents in Scotland, was chosen their president. The ferment was suffered to increase during a course of several years. His lordship was a member of the senate; and his extraordinary conduct in the house, the frequent interruption he gave to the business of parliament, as well as the unaccountable manner in which he continually brought in and treated matters relative to religion and the danger of popery, and the caprice with which he divided the house upon questions wherein he stood nearly or

entirely alone, were passed over, along with other singularities in his dress and manners, rather as subjects of pleasantry than of serious notice or reprehension. On Monday, the 29th of May, 1780, a meeting was held at Coachmaker's Hall, pursuant to a public advertisement, in order to consider of the mode of presenting a petition to the House of Commons. Lord George Gordon took the chair; and, after a long inflammatory harangue, in which he endeavored to persuade his hearers of the rapid and alarming progress that popery was making in the kingdom, he proceeded to observe, that the only way to stop it was, going in a firm, manly and resolute manner to the house, and showing their representatives that they were determined to preserve their religious freedom with their lives; that, for his part, he would run all hazards with the people; and if the people were too lukewarm to run all hazards with him, when their conscience and their country called them forth, they might get another president, for that he would tell them candidly, he was not a lukewarm man himself; and that if they meant to spend their time in mock debate and idle opposition, they might get another leader. This speech was received with the loudest applause, and his lordship then moved the following resolution: "That the whole body of the Protestant Association do attend in St. George's Fields, on Friday next, at ten o'clock in the morning, to accompany their president to the House of Commons at the delivery of the Protestant petition;" which was carried unanimously. His lordship then informed them, that if less than twenty thousand of his fellow-citizens attended him on that day, he would not present their petition. Accordingly, on Friday, the 2d day of June, 1780, at ten in the forenoon, several thousands assembled at the place appointed, marshaling themselves in ranks, and waiting for their leader, who arrived about an hour afterward, and they all proceeded to the houses of parliament. Here they began to exercise the

most arbitrary power over both lords and commons, by obliging almost all the members to put blue cockades on their hats, and call out "no popery!" Some they compelled to take oaths to vote for the repeal of this obnoxious act; others they insulted in the most indecent and insolent manner. They took possession of all the avenues up to the very doors of both houses of parliament, which they twice attempted to force open, and committed many outrages on the persons of the members. Nor were they dispersed, or the remaining members able to leave their seats until a military force arrived. The houses were adjourned to the 19th of June. But so dreadful a spectacle of calamity and horror was never known in any age or country, as that which the metropolis of England exhibited on the evening and the day which succeeded this seditious congregation. These astonishing effects, produced by the real or pretended fanaticism of a simple individual, sufficiently display the power of this dangerous quality, when artfully employed to inflame the passions of the unthinking multitude. But it is worthy of observation, that while this incendiary sustained among his followers the character of a pious patriot, of a man without the smallest spot or blemish; of being, in short, the most virtuous guardian of the established religion of the country, he regularly indulged his holy fervors and sanctified appearances, every evening, in the company of common prostitutes or professed wantons.

The fire of fanaticism is, indeed, so subtilely powerful, that it is capable of inflaming the coldest mind. The mildest and the most rational dispositions have been occasionally injured by its heat. The rapidity of its progress certainly depends, in a great degree, on the nature of the materials on which it acts; but, like every dangerous conflagration, its first appearances should be watched, and every means taken to extinguish its flames. The extinction is, perhaps, most happily and readily effected by those counteractions which the common occupa-

tions and daily duties of life produce on the mind, when judiciously opposed to this flagrant evil. Of the advantages, at least, of this resource, a circumstance in the history of the late Dr. Fothergill, affords a remarkable example. This celebrated physician possessed the greatest tranquillity of mind, and had obtained so complete a dominion over his passions, that he declared to a friend, recently before his death, that he could not recollect a single instance during the whole course of his life, in which they had been improperly disturbed. This temper, which perfectly suited to the character of the religion he professed, the tenets of which he strictly practiced, he maintained on all occasions; nor was there any thing in his general conduct or manner that betrayed to his most familiar friends the least propensity toward enthusiasm; and, yet, distant as the suspicion must be, under these circumstances, that he should ever be under the influence of susperstition, it is well known, that while he was a student at Edinburg, where he was distinguished for the mildness of his manners, and the regularity of his conduct, he one day, in an eccentric sally of fanaticism, ran, almost entirely naked, through the streets of that city, warning all its inhabitants of the impending wrath of heaven; and exhorting them, in the most solemn manner, to avert the approaching danger, by humbly imploring the mercy of the offended Deity; but this religious paroxysm was of short duration. He was at this time in habits of intimacy with the great characters who then filled the professional chairs of the university, and ardently engaged in the pursuits of study; and the exercises which his daily tasks required, together with the company and conversation of these rational, well-informed and thinking men, preserved his reason, and soon restored him to the full and free enjoyment of those faculties, from which both science and humanity afterward derived so many benefits.

The conduct of St. Francis, commonly called the holy

Francis of Assisi, was in some degree similar; excepting that the madness of this fanatic continued throughout his life, while the delirium of Fothergill lasted but a day. This saint was born at Assisi, in the province of Umbria, in the year 1182. His real name of baptism was John; but, on account of the facility with which he acquired the French language, so necessary at that time in Italy, especially for the business for which he was intended, he was called Francis. He is said to have been born with the figure of a cross on his right shoulder, and to have dreamt that he was designed by heaven to promote the interests of that holy sign. His disposition was naturally mild, his comprehension quick, his feelings acute, his manners easy, his imagination vivid, and his passions inordinately warm. A careless and unrestrained indulgence of the propensities of youth had led him into a variety of vicious habits and libertine extravagances, until the solitude to which a fit of sickness confined him, brought him to a recollection, and forced him to reflect upon the dangerous tendency of his past misconduct. His mind started with horror at the dreadful scene his retrospection presented to his view; and he resolved to quit the company of his former associates, to reform the profligacy of his life, to restore his character, and to save, by penitence and prayer, his guilty soul. These serious reflections wrought so powerfully on his dejected mind, that he fell into an extravagant kind of devotion, more resembling madness than religion. Fixing on a passage in St. Matthew, in which our Savior desires his apostles to "provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in their purses; nor script for their journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," he was led to consider a voluntary and absolute poverty as the essence of the gospel, and to prescribe this poverty as a sacred rule, both to himself and to the few who followed him. He accordingly wandered through the streets of Assisi, in garments that scarcely concealed his nakedness, in order, as he said, to inure

himself to the taunts and ridicule of his former companions, whom he now called the children of sin, and followers of Satan. The father of the young saint, supposing, from these extravagances, that the sickness under which he had so long labored had disordered his intellects, prepared to provide him with some proper place of confinement, until time or medical regimen should restore him to his right senses; but the saint, having been informed of his father's friendly intention, declined his parental care, and quitting his house, sought a sanctuary in the palace of the bishop of Assisi. The diocesan immediately sent to the father of the fugitive, and, after hearing him upon the subject of his right to provide for the safety of his son, he turned calmly to the son, and desired him to reply. The son immediately tore off the tattered garments which he then wore, and casting them with scorn and indignation at the feet of his astonished parent, exclaimed: "*There, take back all your property. You were, indeed, my earthly father; but henceforth I disclaim you; for I own no father, but him who is in heaven.*" The bishop, either really or affectedly delighted with this unnatural rant of the young enthusiast, threw his own mantle over the saint, and exhorted him to persevere in his holy resolution, and to cherish, with increasing ardor, the divine inspiration of his pious mind. The frantic youth, animated by the warm approbation of the bishop, proceeded in his religious course, and abandoning the city, retired into the deepest gloom of an adjacent forest, to indulge the fervors of that false enthusiasm which had overpowered his brain. In this retreat, a second vision confirmed him in his holy office; and, being encouraged by Pope Innocent III and Honorious, he established, in the year 1209, the Order of St. Francis. If this ridiculous enthusiast had corrected the extravagances of his over-heated imagination, by a cool and temperate exercise of his reason, by studying, like the celebrated physician we have just mentioned, some liberal science,

he might, with the talents he possessed, have become a really useful member of society. But these wild shoots, if suffered to grow to any hight, can not afterward be easily eradicated; and even Fothergill, if he had lived like Francis, in an age of superstitious delusion, and had been encouraged to believe the truth of his fanatic conceptions, his temporary phrenzy might have continued through life; and his character, instead of being revered as a promoter of an useful science, have been held up by an ignorant multitude to the contempt and ridicule of posterity.

The vacancy of solitude, by leaving the mind to its own ideas, encourages to a great excess these wild and eccentric sallies of the imagination. He who has an opportunity to indulge, without interruption or restraint, the delightful musings of an excursive fancy, will soon lose all relish for every other pleasure, and neglect every employment which tends to interrupt the gratification of such an enchanting, though dangerous propensity. During the quietude of a sequestered life, imagination usurps the throne of reason, and all the feeble faculties of the mind obey her dictates, until her voice becomes despotic. If the high powers be exercised on the agreeable appearances of nature and the various entertainments poetry, painting, music, or any of the elegant arts are capable of affording—

* * * Then the inexpressive strain
Diffuses its enchantment; fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains, and elysian groves,
And vales of bliss; the intellectual Power
Bends from his awful throne a wandering ear,
And smiles; the passions, gently smooth'd away,
Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
Alone are waking.

But if the mind, as in the solitude of monastic seclusion, fixes its attention on ascetic subjects, and fires the fancy with unnatural legends, the soul, instead of sinking to divine

repose, feels a morbid melancholy and discontented torpor, which extinguishes all rational reflection, and engenders the most fantastic visions.

Men, even of strong natural understandings, highly improved by education, have, in some instances, not been able to resist the fatal effects of intense application, and long continued solitude. The learned Molanus having, during a course of many years, detached his mind from all objects of sense, neglected all seasonable and salutary devotion, and giving an uncontrolled license to his imagination, fancied in the latter part of his life, that he was a *barley corn;* and, although he received his friends with great courtesy and politeness, and conversed upon subjects both of science and devotion with great ease and ingenuity, he could never afterward be persuaded to stir from home, lest, as he expressed his apprehension, he should be picked up in the street, and swallowed by a fowl.

The female mind is still more subject to these delusions of disordered fancy; for, as their feelings are more exquisite, their passions warmer, and their imaginations more active than those of the other sex, solitude, when carried to excess, effects them in a much greater degree. Their bosoms are much more susceptible to the injurious influence of seclusion, to the contagion of example, and to the dangers of illusion. This may, perhaps, in some degree, account for the similarity of disposition which prevails in cloisters, and other institutions which confine women entirely to the company of each other. The force of example and habit is, indeed, in such retreats, surprisingly powerful. A French medical writer, of great merit and undoubted veracity, relates, that in a convent of nuns, where the sisterhood was unusually numerous, one of those secluded fair ones was seized with a strange impulse to mew like a cat; that several others of the nuns in a short time followed her example; and that at length this unaccountable

propensity became general throughout the convent; the whole sisterhood joined, at stated periods, in the practice of mewing, and continued it for several hours. But of all the extraordinary fancies recorded of the sex, none can exceed that which Cardan relates to have happened in one of the convents of Germany, during the fifteenth century. One of the nuns who had long been secluded from the sight of man, was seized with the strange propensity to bite all her companions; and extraordinary as it may seem, this disposition spread until the whole house was infected with the same fury. The account, indeed, states, that this mania extended even beyond the walls of the convent, and that the disease was conveyed to such a degree from cloister to cloister, throughout Germany, Holland and Italy, that the practice at length prevailed in every female convent in Europe.

The instances of the pernicious influence of a total deriliction of society, may possibly appear to the understandings of the present generation extravagant and incredible; but they are certainly true; and many others of a similar nature might be adduced from the most authentic histories of the times. The species when prevented from enjoying a free intercourse and rational society with each other, almost change their nature; and the mind feeding continually on the melancholy musings of the imagination, in the cold and cheerless regions of solitude, engenders humors of the most eccentric cast. Excluded from those social communications which nature enjoins, with the means of gratifying the understanding, amusing the senses, or interesting the affections, fancy roves at large into unknown spheres, and endeavors to find in ideal forms entertainment and delight. Angelic visions, infernal phantoms, amazing prodigies, the delusions of alchemy, the phrensies of philosophy, and the madness of metaphysics, fill the disordered brain. The intellect fastens upon some absurd idea, and fosters it with the fondest affection, until its increas-

ing magnitude subdues the remaining powers of sense and reason. The slightest retrospect into the conduct of the solitary professors of every religious system, proves the lamentable dangers to which they expose their mental faculties, by excluding themselves from the intercourses of rational society. From the prolific womb of solitude, sprung all the mysterious ravings and senseless doctrines of the New Platonists. The same cause devoted the monks and anchorites of the Christian church to folly and fanaticism. Fakirs, Bramins, and every other tribe of religious enthusiast, originated from the same source. By abandoning the pleasures of society, and renouncing the feelings of nature, they sacrificed reason upon the altar of superstition, and supplied its place with ecstatic fancies and melancholy musings. There is nothing more evident, than that our holy religion, in its original constitution, was set so far apart from all refined speculations, that it seemed in a manner diametrically opposite to them. The great founder of Christianity gave one simple rule of life to all men; but his disciples, anxious to indulge the natural vanity of the human mind, and misled, in some degree, by the false philosophy which at that period overspread the heathen world, introduced various doctrines of salvation, and new schemes of faith. Bigotry, a species of superstition never known before, took place in men's affections, and armed them with new jealousies against each other; barbarous terms and idioms were every day invented; monstrous definitions imposed, and hostilities, the fiercest imaginable, exercised on each other by contending parties. Fanaticism, with all the train of visions, prophecies, dreams, charms, miracles and exercises, succeeded; and spiritual feats, of the most absurd and ridiculous nature, were performed in monasteries, or up and down, by their mendicant or itinerant priests, and ghostly missionaries. Solitude impressed the principles upon which these extravagances were founded, with uncommon force on the

imagination; and the mind, working itself into holy fervors and inspirations, give birth to new extravagances. The causes which operated on the minds of men to produce such ridiculous effects, acted with double force on the ardent temper, warm imagination and excessive sensibility of the female world. That which was mere fantasy with the one sex, became phrenzy with the other. Women, indeed, are, according to the opinion of Plato, the nurses of fanaticism; and their favorite theme is that which has been dignified by the appellation of *a sublime passion for poetry;* an ardent, refined love of heaven; but which, in fact, is only the natural effects of the heart, swollen intumescently by an unreined, prolific, and too ardent imagination. Instances of this kind are discoverable in all the accounts that have been published of the holy fervors of these penitents, particularly in those of Catharine of Sienna, of Joan of Cambray, of Angelina of Foligny, of Matilda of Saxony, of Maria of the Incarnation, of Mary Magdalen of Pazzio, of Gertrude of Saxony, and many others. The celebrated Armelle, who was born in the year 1606, at Campenac, in the diocese of St. Malo, and who died at Vannes in the year 1761, possessed great personal beauty, a quick and lively mind, and an uncommon tenderness of heart. Her parents, who were honest and industrious villagers, placed her as a menial servant in the house of a neighboring gentleman, with whom she lived for five-and-thirty years in the practice of the most exemplary piety and extraordinary virtue, at least, according to the accounts which he gave from time to time of her conduct. During the time she resided with this gentleman, his groom, finding the kitchen door fastened, had the curiosity to peep through the key-hole, where he discovered the pious maid in a paroxysm of divine ecstasy, performing the humble office of spitting a capon. The agitation of this holy spirit so affected the mind of the astonished youth, that, it is said by the Ursuline sister, who has written the life of this

great luminary of French sanctity, under the title of *The school for the love of God*, he became immediately enamored with the beauties of religion, and renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world, entered into a monastery, at the same time that his holy companion thought proper to withdraw from future observation into the convent of Vannes, where she devoted the remainder of her life and died, as it is reported, of an excess of divine love. The youthful days of Armelle had been passed in almost total solitude; for her occupation at the house in which she was placed by her parents, was confined entirely to the kitchen, and she had scarcely any other intercourse than with its furniture. It appears, however, from the history of her life, that she was from her childhood excessively fond of reciting an *ave or paternoster;* and while occupied in tending the flocks, her original employment, amused herself in telling her rosary; "by which means," says the Ursuline sister, "she made, even in her pastoral state of simplicity and ignorance, such great advances in divine love, that the first moment she was allowed to pay her adoration to the crucifix, the fervency of her pious passion burst forth with such ecstasy, that she eagerly snatched the holy object to her arms, and embraced it with a transport so warmly affectionate, that streams of tenderness rushed from her eyes."

It is truly said by a celebrated English writer, to be "of the utmost importance to guard against extremes of every kind in religion. We must beware lest by seeking to avoid one rock we split upon another. It has been long the subject of remark, that superstition and enthusiasm are two capital sources of delusion; superstition, on the one hand, attaching men with immoderate zeal to the ritual and external points of religion; and enthusiasm, on the other, directing their whole attention to internal emotions and mystical communications with the spiritual world; while neither the one nor

the other had paid sufficient regard to the great moral duties of the Christian life. But, running with intemperate eagerness from these two great abuses of religion, men have neglected to observe that there are extremes opposite to each of them, into which they are in hazard of precipitating themselves. Thus the horror of superstition has sometimes reached so far as to produce contempt for all external institutions; as if it were possible for religion to subsist in the world without forms of worship, or public acknowledgment of God. It has also happened, that some, who, in the main, are well affected to the cause of goodness, observing that persons of a devout turn have at times been carried away, by warm affections, into unjustifiable excesses, have thence, hastily concluded that all devotion was akin to enthusiasm; and, separating religion totally from the heart and affections, have reduced it to a frigid observance of what they call the rules of virtue. These extremes are to be carefully avoided. True devotion is rational and well founded, and consists in the lively exercise of that affection which we owe to the Supreme Being, comprehending several emotions of the heart, which all terminate in the same great object.

These are among the evils which an irrational solitude is capable of producing upon an unrestrained and misdirected imagination; but I do not mean to contend indiscriminately, that solitude is generally to be considered as dangerous to the free indulgence of this delightful faculty of the mind. Solitude, well chosen, and rationally pursued, is so far from being either the open enemy, or the treacherous friend, of a firm and fine imagination, that it ripens its earliest shoots, strengthens their growth, and contributes to the production of its richest and most valuable fruits. To him who has acquired the happy art of enjoying in solitude the charms of nature, and of indulging the powers of fancy without impairing the faculty of reason—

* * * Whate'er adorns,
The princely dome, the column and the arch,
The breathing marble, and the sculptur'd gold,
Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
His happy breast enjoys. For him the spring
Distills her dews, and from the silken gem
Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him the hand
Of autumn tinges every fertile branch
With blooming gold, and blushes like the morn.
Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings;
And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
And loves unfelt attract him. Not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow: not a cloud imbibes
The setting sun's effulgence; not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasure, unreprov'd. Nor thence partake
Fresh pleasure only; for the attentive mind,
By this harmonious action on her powers,
Becomes herself harmonious.

CHAPTER X.

THE EFFECTS OF SOLITUDE ON A MELANCHOLY MIND.

A DISPOSITION to enjoy the silence of sequestered solitude, and a glowing distaste of the noisy tumults of public life, are the earliest and most general symptoms of approaching melancholy. The heart on which felicity was used to sit enthroned, becomes senseless to the touch of pleasure; the airy wing of high delight sinks prostrate to the earth on broken pinions; and care and anxiety, chagrin and regret, load the mind with distempering ideas, and render it cheerless and forlorn. The dawning sun and heaven lighted day give no pleasure to the sickened senses of the unhappy sufferer. His only pleasure is to "commune with his own griefs;" and for this purpose he seeks some gloomy glen—

"Where bitter boding melancholy reigns
O'er heavy sighs and care disorder'd thoughts."

But a mind thus disposed, however it may for a time console its sorrows, by retiring from the world, thereby becomes more weak and helpless. Solitude, in such cases, increases the disorder, while it softens its effects. To eradicate the seeds of this dreadful malady, the imagination should be impressed with some new, contrary, and more powerful bias than that which sways the mind, which can only be turned from its course of thought by shifting the object of its reflection, and giving entrance to new desires. A melancholy mind, therefore, should be weaned by degrees from its disposi-

tion to solitude, should be agreeably interrupted in its musings, and be induced to relish the varying pleasures of the world. But, above all, those scenes and subjects which have any connection, however remotely, with the cause of the complaint, must be cautiously avoided. The seeds of this dreadful malady are, in general, very deeply planted in the constitution of the patient, however accidental the circumstances may be when relieved from its oppression, is, if left to itself, always in danger of relapsing into its former habit. This circumstance alone is sufficient to show how unfriendly solitude must be to the cure of this complaint. If, indeed, the patient be so far gone as to leave no hope of recovery; if his desponding heart be incapable of any new impression; if his mind foregoes all custom of mirth; if he refuse to partake of any healthful exercise, or agreeable recreation; and the soul sinks day after day into deeper dejection, and threatens nature with madness or with death, solitude is the only resource. When melancholy seizes, to a certain degree, the mind of an Englishman, it almost uniformly leads him to put a period to his existence; whilst the worst effect it produces on a Frenchman, is to induce him to turn Carthusian. Such dissimilar effects, proceeding from the operation of the same cause, in different persons, can only be accounted for from the greater opportunities which there is in France than in England to hide the sorrows of the mind from the inspection of the world. An English hypochondriac would, perhaps, seldom destroy himself, if there were in England any monastic institution, to which he could fly from the eye of public observation.

The mind, in proportion as it loses its proper tone, and natural elasticity, decreases in its attachments to society, and wishes to recede from the world and its concerns. There is no disorder of the mind, among all the various causes by which it may be effected, that destroys its force and activity so entirely as melancholy. It unties, as it were, all the relations,

both physical and moral, of which society, in its most perfect state, consists, and sets the soul free from all sense of obligation. The private link which unites the species is destroyed; all inclination to the common intercourse of life is lost; and the only remaining disposition is for solitude. It is for this reason that melancholy persons are continually advised to frequent the theaters, masquerades, operas, balls, and other places of public diversion; to amuse themselves at home with cards, dice, or other games; or to infuse from the eyes of female beauty new life into their drooping souls. Certain it is, that great advantages may be derived by detaching the mind from those objects by which it is tortured and consumed; but to run indiscriminately, and with injudicious eagerness, into the pursuit of pleasures, without any predisposition to enjoy them, may rather tend to augment than diminish the disease.

The eye of melancholy views every object on its darkest and most unfavorable side, and apprehends disastrous consequences from every occurrence. These gloomy perceptions, which increase as the feelings become more indolent, and the constitution more morbid, bring on habitual uneasiness and chagrin upon the mind, and render every injury, however small and trifling it may be, irksome and insupportable. A settled dejection ensues; and the miserable patient avoids every scene in which his musings may be liable to interruption; the few enjoyments he is yet capable of feeling in any degree impeded, or which may call upon him to make the slightest exertion; and by withdrawing himself from society into solitude, neglects the exercises and recreations by which his disease might be relieved. Instead of endeavoring to enlighten the dark gloom which involves his mind, and subdues his soul, by regarding with a favorable eye all that gives a true value and high relish to men of sound minds and lively dispositions, he fondly follows the phantom which misleads him, and thereby sinks himself more deeply into the moody

fanes of irremediable melancholy; and if the bright rays of life and happiness penetrate by chance into the obscurity of his retreat, instead of feeling any satisfaction from the perception of cheerfulness and content, he quarrels with the possessor of them, and converts their enjoyments into subjects of grievance, in order to torment himself.

Unfavorable, however, as a dreary and disconsolate solitude certainly is to the recovery of a mind laboring under this grievous affliction, it is far preferable to the society of licentious companions, and to wild scenes of inebriating dissipation. Worldly pleasures, and sensual gratifications of every description, when intemperately pursued, only drive a melancholy mind into a more abject state of dejection. It is from rational recreation, and temperate pleasures alone, that an afflicted mind can receive amusement and delight. The only scenes by which the mudded current of his mind can be cleared, or his stagnated system of pleasure refreshed, must be calm, cheerful and temperate, not gay. Melancholy is of a sedate and pensive character, and flies from whatever is hurrying and tumultuous. How frequently do men of contemplative dispositions conceive a distaste for the world, only because they have unthinkingly engaged so ardently in the pursuits of pleasure, or of business, that they have been prevented for a length of time, from collecting their scattered ideas, and indulging their natural habits of reflection! But, in striving to reclaim a melancholy mind, it is necessary to attend to the feelings of the heart, as well as the peculiar temper of the mind. A gloomy, disturbed, unquiet mind, is highly irritated, and its disease of course increased by the company and conversation of those whose senseless bosoms are incapable of feeling the griefs it endures or the complaints it utters. This, indeed, is another cause which drives melancholy persons from society into solitude; for how few are they whose tenderness leads them to sympathize with a brother in distress,

or to contribute a kind aid to eradicate the thorns which rankle in his heart! Robust characters, in whose bosoms nature has planted the impenetrable shield of unvarying health, as well as those whose minds are engrossed by the charms of uninterrupted prosperity, can form no idea of the secret but severe agonies which shake the system of valetudinary men; nor feel any compassion for the tortures which accompany a wounded and afflicted spirit, until the convulsive frame proclaims the dreadful malady, or increasing melancholy sacrifices its victim on the altar of self-destruction. The gay associates of the unfeeling world view a companion suffering under the worst of nature's evils, with cold indifference or affected concern; or in the career of pleasure, overlook the misery he feels, until they hear that exhausted woe has induced him to brave the anger of the Almighty, and to rush from mortal misery, uncalled, into the awful presence of his Creator. Dreadful state! The secresy and silence, indeed, with which persons of this description conceal the pangs that torture their minds, is among the most dangerous symptoms of the disease. It is not, indeed, easy to hide from the anxious and attentive eye of real friendship, the feelings of the heart; but to the careless and indifferent multitude of common acquaintances the countenance may wear the appearance not only of composure, but even of gayety, while the soul is inwardly suffering the keenest anguish of unutterable woe. The celebrated Carlini, a French actor of great merit, and in high reputation with the public, for the life, whim, frolic and vivacity with which he nightly entertained the Parisian audiences, applied to a physician, to whom he was not personally known, for advice, and represented to him that he was subject to attacks of the deepest melancholy. The physician advised him to amuse his mind by scenes of pleasure, and particularly directed him to frequent the Italian comedy; "For," continued he, "your distemper must be rooted indeed,

if the acting of the lively Carlini does not remove it." "Alas!" exclaimed the unhappy patient, "I am the very Carlini whom you recommend me to see; and while I am capable of filling Paris with mirth and laughter, I am myself the dejected victim of melancholy and chagrin."

Painful as it may be to a person who is laboring under the oppression of melancholy, to associate with those who are incapable of sympathizing with his feelings, or who neglect to compassionate his sufferings, yet he should not fly from the presence of men into solitude; for solitude will unavoidably aggravate and augment his distress, inasmuch as it tends to encourage that musing and soliloquy to which melancholy is invariably prone. It is the most dangerous resource to which he can fly; for while it seems to promise the fairest hope of relief, it betrays the confidence reposed in it; and instead of shielding its votary from that conflict which disturbs his repose, it renders him defenseless, and delivers him unarmed to his bitterest enemy.

The boldest spirits and firmest nerves can not withstand the inroads of melancholy merely by their own strength. It damps the courage of the most enterprising mind, and makes him who was before, upon all occasions, fearless and unawed, shrink even from the presence of his fellow-creatures. Company of every description becomes displeasing to him; he dreads the idea of visiting, and if he is induced to quit the domestic solitude into which he retires, it is only when the glorious, but to him offensive, light of heaven is concealed in congenial darkness; and the shades of night hide him from the observation of man. An invitation to social entertainment alarms his mind; the visit even of a friend becomes painful to his feelings; and he detests every thing which lightens the gloom in which he wishes to live, or which tends to disturb his privacy, or remove him from his retreat.

Rousseau, toward the latter part of his life, abandoned all

intercourse with society under a notion, which was the effect of his melancholy disposition, that the world had conceived an unconquerable antipathy against him; and that his former friends, particularly Hume, and some philosophers in France, not only had entered into confederacy to destroy his glory and repose, but to take away his life. On departing from England, he passed through Amiens, where he met Gresset, who interrogated him about his misfortunes, and the controversies in which he had been engaged; but Rousseau only answered, "You have got the art of making a parrot speak, but you are not yet possessed of the secret of giving language to a bear;" and when the magistrates of the city wished to confer on him some marks of their esteem, he refused all their offers, and considered these flattering civilities like the insults which were lavished in the same form on the celebrated Sancho in the island of Barataria. To such extent, indeed, did his disordered imagination carry him, that he thought one part of the people looked upon him like Lazarillo de Tormes, who, being fixed to the bottom of a tub, with only his head out of water, was carried from one town to another to amuse the vulgar. His bad health, a strong and melancholy imagination, a too nice sensibility, a jealous disposition, joined with philosophic vanity, and his uncommon devotion to solitude, tended to prepossess him with those wrong and whimsical ideas. But it must be confessed that the opposition he met with from different ranks of persons, at several periods of his life, was extremely severe. He was driven at one time from France, in which he had before been distinguished by his writings, and highly honored. At another time he was chased from Geneva, the place of his nativity, and of his warmest affection. He was exiled from Berne with disgrace; expelled, with some appearance of injustice, from Neufchatel; and even banished from his tranquil solitude on the borders of the lake of Bienne. His disposition there-

fore, to avoid society, must not be entirely attributed to his melancholy disposition; nor his love of solitude to a misanthropic mind. Every acute and scientific observer of the life and character of this extraordinary man will immediately perceive that the seeds of that melancholy disposition, and fretful temper, which through life destroyed his repose, were sown by nature in his constitution. He confesses, indeed, to use his own words, that "a proud misanthropy, and peculiar contempt for the riches and pleasures of the world, constituted the chief traits of his character." This proud spirit and contemptuous mind were mixed with an extreme sensibility of heart, and an excessive indolence of disposition; and his body, which was naturally feeble, suffered, from ill-health, the keenest agonies, and most excruciating disorders, to which the human frame is incident. Persecution also had leveled the most pointed and severely barbed shafts against him; and he was forced to endure, amidst the pangs of poverty, and the sorrows of sickness, all that envy, hatred and malice could inflict. It has been said, that the persecutions he experienced were not so much excited by the new dogmas, or eccentric paradoxes, which, both on politics and religion, pervade all his writings, as by the refinement of his extraordinary talents, the wonderful splendor of his eloquence, and the increasing extent of his fame. His adversaries certainly pursued him, not only with bigotry and intolerence, but with an inconsistency which revealed, in a great degree, the secret motives by which they were actuated; for they condemned, with the sharpest virulence the freedom of his religious tenets, even in places where the religious creed of Voltaire was held in the highest admiration, and where atheism had collected the most learned advocates, and displayed the very standard of infidelity and disbelief. Harassed by the frowns of fortune, and pursued with unrelenting enmity by men whose sympathy and kindness he had anxiously endeavored to obtain, it is scarcely

surprising that the cheerfulness of his disposition, and the kindness of his heart, should be subdued by those sentiments of aversion and antipathy which he fancied most of his intimates entertained against him; and the invectives from the pen of his former friend and confident, Voltaire, together with many others that might be adduced, particularly the letter which was fabricated in the name of the king of Prussia, for the purpose of exposing him to ridicule, prove that his suspicions on the subject were not unfounded. The voice, indeed, of mankind, seems ready to exclaim, that this eccentric philosopher was not only a misanthrope, but a madman; but those who are charitably disposed, will recollect that he was a martyr to ill health; that nature had bestowed upon him a discontented mind; that his nerves were in a continued state of irritation; and that to preserve equanimity of temper when goaded by the shafts of calumny and malice, requires such an extraordinary degree of fortitude and passive courage as few individuals are found to possess. His faults are remembered, while the wonderful bloom and uncommon vigor of his genius are forgotten or concealed. The production from which his merits are in general estimated, is that which is called "The Confessions;" a work written under the pressure of calamity, in sickness and in sorrow; amidst fears, distresses and sufferings; when the infirmities which accompany old age, and the debility which attends continued ill health, had injured the tone of his mind, overpowered his reason, and perverted his feelings to such a degree, as to create an almost total transformation of the character of the man, and deprive him of his identity; but this degrading work ought, in candor, to be considered as a deplorable instance of the weakness of human nature, and how unable it is to support its own dignity when attacked by the adversities of fortune, and the malice of mankind. The greatness of Rousseau ought to be erected on a different basis; for his earliest

works are certainly sufficient to support the extent of his fame as an author, however they may on particular subjects expose his integrity as a man.

The anxieties which a vehemence of imagination, and a tender texture of the nervous system, at all times produce, are highly injurious to the faculties of the mind; and, when accompanied by sickness or by sorrow, wear out the intellect in proportion to its vigor and activity. To use the popular metaphor upon this subject, "The sword becomes too sharp for the scabbard; and the body and the mind are thereby exposed to mutual destruction.

Religious melancholy is, of all other descriptions of this dreadful disease, most hightened and aggravated by solitude. The dreadful idea of having irretrievably lost the divine favor, and of being an object unworthy of the intercession of our Savior, incessantly haunts the mind, laboring under religious despondency, and the imagination being left in solitude, entirely to its own workings, increases the horrors which such thoughts must unavoidably inspire.

Her lash Tisiphone that moment shakes;
The mind she scourges with a thousand snakes,
And to her aid, with many a thundering yell,
Calls her dire sisters from the gulf of hell!

These mutual tortures, even when hightened by the gloominess of solitude, are frequently still further increased by the mischievious doctrines of bigoted priests, who, by mistaking the effects of nervous derangement, or theological errors, for the compunctious visitings of a guilty mind, establish and mature, by the injudicious application of scriptural texts, and precepts of casuistry, the very disease which they thus ignorantly and presumptuously endeavor to remove. The wound, thus tainted by the most virulent and corrosive of the intellectual poisons, becomes extremely difficult to cure. The pure and uncontaminated tenets of the Christian faith furnishes,

perhaps, the surest antidotes; and when these balms of true comfort are infused by such enlightened and discerning minds as Luther, Tillotson and Clark, the most rational hope may be entertained of a speedy recovery. The writings of those holy teachers confirm the truth of the observation, that the deleterious gloom of superstition assumes a darker aspect in the shades of retirement, and they uniformly exhort the unhappy victims of this religious error to avoid solitude as the most certain enemy of this dreadful infirmity.

Solitude, however, is not the only soil in which this noxious weed springs up, spreading around its baleful glooms; it sometimes appears with deeply-rooted violence in minds unused to retirement of every kind. In the course of my practice, as a physician, I was called upon to attend a young lady, whose natural disposition had been extremely cheerful, until a severe fit of sickness damped her spirits, and rendered her averse to all those lively pleasures which fascinate the youthful mind. The debility of her frame, and the change of her temper, were not sufficiently attended to in the early stages of her convalescence. The anxiety of her mind was visible in the altered features of her face; and she was frequently heard to express a melancholy regret, that she had consumed so many hours in the frivolous, though innocent, amusements of the age. Time increased, by almost imperceptible degrees, these symptoms of approaching melancholy; and at length exhibited themselves by penitential lamentations of the sin she had committed with respect to the most trifling actions of her life, and in which no shadow of offense could possibly be found. At the same time I was called in, this superstitious melancholy was attended with certain indications of mental derangement. The distemper clearly originated in the indisposition of the body, and the gloomy apprehensions which disease and pain had introduced into the mind, during a period of many months. This once lively, handsome, but now almost insane female,

was daily attacked with such violent paroxysms of her complaint, that she lost all sense of her situation, and exclaimed, in horrid distraction and deep despair, that her perdition was already accomplished, and that *the fiends were waiting to receive her soul, and plunge it into the bitterest torments of hell.* Her constitution, however, still fortunately retained sufficient strength to enable me, by the power of medicine, gradually to change its temperament, and to reduce the violence of the fever, which had been long preying upon her life. Her mind became more calm in proportion as her nerves recovered their former tone; and when her intellectual powers were in a condition to be acted on with effect, I successfully counteracted the baleful effects of superstition by the wholesome infusion of real religion, and restored, by degrees, a lovely, young, and virtuous woman, to her family and herself.

Another instance of a similar nature occurred very recently, in which the patient experienced all those symptoms which prognosticate the approach of religious melancholy, and the completion of whose sorrow and despondency would quickly have been effected, if good fortune had not deprived her of the advice of an ignorant and bigoted priest, to whom her friends, when I was called in, had resolved to apply. This young lady, whose mind remained pure and uncorrupted amidst all the luxuries and dissipations which usually accompany illustrious birth and elevated station, possessed, by nature, great tranquillity of disposition, and lived with quietude and content, far retired from the pleasures of the world. I had been long acquainted with her family, and entertained for them the warmest esteem. The dangerous condition of her health gave me great anxiety and concern; for whenever she was left one moment to herself, and even in company, whenever she closed her eyes, a thousand horrid specters presented themselves to her disordered mind, and seemed ready to devour her from every corner of the apartment. I inquired whether these ima-

ginary specters made any impression upon the affections of her heart; but she answered in the negative, and described the horrors which she felt from the supposed fierceness of their eyes, and the threatening gesticulations of their bodies. I endeavored to compose her, by assuring her that they were the creatures of fancy, the wild chimeras of a weakened brain; that her long course of ill health had affected her mind; and that, when a proper course of medicine, dietetic regimen, and gentle exercise, had restored her strength, these dreadful appearances would give way to the most delightful visions. The course I pursued succeeded in a short time beyond my most sanguine expectations, and I raised her languid powers to health and happiness. But if she had confined the anxieties of her mind to her confessor, instead of her physician, the holy father would, in all probability, have ascribed her gloomy apprehension to the machinations of the devil, and have used nothing but pure spiritual antidotes to destroy them, which would have increased the melancholy, and possibly have thrown her into the darkest abyss of madness and despair.

This grievous malady, indeed, is not the exclusive offspring of mistaken piety and religious zeal; for it frequently invades minds powerful by nature, improved by science, and assisted by rational society. Health, learning, conversation, highly advantageous as they unquestionably are to the powers both of the body and the mind, have in particular instances, been found incapable of resisting the influence of intense speculation, an atrabilarious constitution and a superstitious habit. I have already mentioned the thick cloud of melancholy which obscured the latter days of the great and justly celebrated Haller, which were passed under the oppression of a religious despondency, that robbed him not only of all enjoyment, but almost of life itself. During the long period of four years, immediately antecedent to his death, he lived (if such a state could be called existence) in continual misery; except, indeed,

at those short intervals when the returning powers of his mind enabled him, by the employment of his pen, to experience a temporary relief. A long course of ill health had forced him into an excessive use of opium, and by taking gradually increased quantities of that inspissated juice, he kept himself continually fluctuating between a state of mind unnaturally elevated and deeply dejected; for the first effects of this powerful drug are like those of a strong stimulating cordial, but they are soon succeeded by universal languor or irresistible propensity to sleep, attended with dreams of the most agitated and enthusiastic nature. I was myself an eyewitness of the dreary melancholy into which this great and good man was plunged, about two years before the kind, but cold, and though friendly, yet unwelcome hand of death, released him from his pains. The society which, during that time, he was most solicitous to obtain, was that of priests and ecclesiastics of every description; he was uneasy when they were not with him; nor was he always happy in his choice of these spiritual comforters; for though, at times, he was attended by some of the most enlightened and orthodox divines of the age and country in which he lived, he was at others surrounded by those whom nothing but the reduced and abject state of his faculties would have suffered him to endure. But during even this terrible subversion of his intellectual powers, his love of glory still survived in its original radiance, and defied all the terrors both of heaven and earth to destroy or diminish their force. Haller had embraced very deep and serious notions of the importance of Christianity to the salvation of the soul, and the redemption of mankind, which by the ardency of his temper, and the saturnine disposition of his mind, were carried into a mistaken zeal and apprehension; and, instead of affording the comfort and consolation its tenets and principles are so eminently calculated to inspire, aggravated his feelings and destroyed his repose. In a let-

ter which he wrote a few days before his death, to his great and good friend the celebrated Heyne, of Gottingen, in which he announces the deep sense he entertained from his great age and multiplied infirmities, of his impending dissolution, he expressed his firm belief of Revelation, and his faith in the mercy of God, and the intercession of Jesus Christ; but hints his fears lest the manifold sins, and the various errors and transgressions which the natural frailty of man must have accumulated during a course of seventy years, should have rendered his soul too guilty to expect the promised mercy to repentant sinners, and earnestly requests of him to inquire of his acquaintance Less, the virtuous divine of that place, whether he could not furnish him with some pious work, that might tend to decrease the terrors he felt from the idea of approaching death, and relieve his tortured spirit from the apprehension of eternal punishment. The sentiments which occupied the mind of this pious philosopher when the dreaded hour actually arrived, whether it was comforted by the bright rays of hope, or dismayed into total eclipse by the dark clouds of despair, those who surrounded his dying couch have not communicated to the world. Death, while it released both his body and his mind from the painful infirmities and delusions under which they had so long and severely suffered, left his fame, which, while living, he had valued much dearer than his life, exposed to the cruel shafts of slander and malevolence. A young nobleman of the canton of Berne, either moved by his own malice, or made an instrument of the malice of others, asserted in a letter, which was for a long time publicly exhibited in the university of Gottingen, that Haller had in his last moments denied his belief of the truth of Christianity. But those by whom he was then surrounded, betray, by the propagation of this falsehood, the fears they entertained of the firm support which his approbation would have given to that pure and pious system of

religion, which they, it is well known, are so disposed to destroy. For certain it is, that Haller never doubted any of the attributes of the Deity, except his mercy; and this doubt was not the offspring of infidelity, but a crude abortion of that morbid melancholy, which, during his latter days, settled so severely on his distempered mind. The same dread which he entertained of death, has been felt with equal, if not greater horror, by minds as powerful and less superstitious. He candidly confessed the important and abstruse point upon which he had not been able to satisfy himself. His high sense of virtue made even his own almost exemplary and unblemished life appear, in his too refined speculations, grossly vicious. Mercy, he knew, must unavoidably be correlative with justice; and he unfortunately conceived that no repentance, however sincere, could so purify the sinful, and, as he imagined, deplorable corruption of his soul, as to render it worthy of divine grace; so utterly had the melancholy dejection of his mind deprived him of a just sense of his character, and perfect knowledge of the nature of the Almighty. The mournful propensity of this great man must, if he had passed his days either in pious abstinence, or irrational solitude, have hurried him rapidly into irrecoverable phrenzy; but Haller enjoyed the patronage of the great, the conversation of the learned, the company of the polite; and he not only suspended the effects of his malady, and of the medicines by which he attempted to relieve it, by these advantages, but by the sciences, which he so dearly loved, and so successfully cultivated. The horrible evil, however, bowed him down in spite of all his efforts, and particularly oppressed him whenever he relaxed from his literary pursuits, or consulted his ghostly comforters on the lost condition of his soul.

Solitude, to a mind laboring under these erroneous notions of religion, operates like a rack, by which the imagination inflicts the severest tortures on the soul. A native of Geneva,

a young man of very elegant manners, and a highly cultivated mind, some time since, consulted me upon the subject of a nervous complaint, which I immediately discovered to be the consequence of a mistaken zeal for religion, a disposition naturally sedentary, and a habit which is too frequently indulged in solitude by unthinking youth. These circumstances had already made the most dreadful inroads both on his body and his mind. His emaciated frame was daily enfeebled by his paralyzed intellects, and he at length fell into a settled melancholy, which continued four years to defy the power of medicine, and finally destroyed his nervous system. A strong conviction of the heinous sin into which the blindness of his passion, and evil example, had led him, at length flashed suddenly on his mind, and he felt, with the keenest compunctions of a wounded conscience, how impious he must appear to the all-seeing eye of the great Creator. Consternation and dismay seized his guilty mind; and the sense of virtue and religion, which he was naturally disposed to entertain, served only to increase his horror and distraction. He would have sought a refuge from the arrows of remorse under the protecting shields of penitence and prayer, but a scrupulous apprehension interposed the idea that it would be profanation in so guilty a sinner to exercise the offices of a pure and holy religion. He at length, however, proceeded to confession; but recollecting, after every disclosure, that he had still omitted many of his transgressions, additional horrors seized upon his mind and tortured his feelings on the irrecoverable condition of his guilty soul. At intervals, indeed, he was able to perceive that the pertubations of his mind were the produce of his disorganized frame and disordered spirit; and he endeavored to recruit the one by air and exercise, and to dissipate the other by scenes of festivity and mirth; but his disorder had fixed its fibers too deeply in his constitution to be eradicated by such slight and temporary remedies. From the inefficacious

antidotes of social pleasure and worldly dissipation, he was induced to try the calm and sedentary effects of solitary study; but his faculties were incapable of tasting the refined and elegant occupations of learning and the muse; his powers of reasoning were destroyed; his sensibilities, excepting on the subject of his complaint, were dried up; and neither the sober investigations of science, nor the more lively charms of poetry, were capable of affording him the least consolation. Into so abject a state, indeed, did his intellectual faculties at length f ll, that he had not, during one period, sufficient ability to compute the change due to him from any piece of coin in the common transactions of life; and he confessed that he had been frequently tempted by the deepness of his distress, to release both his body and his mind from their cruel sufferings, and "to shake impatiently his great affliction off" by self-destruction; but the idea of heaping new punishment on his soul, by the perpetration of this additional crime, continually interposed, and saved him from the guilty deed. During this state of mental derangement, he fortunately met with a liberal minded and rational divine, who, free from the errors of priest-craft, and possessed of a profound knowledge of the virtues of religion and the structure of the human mind, undertook the arduous, but humane and truly philosophic task of endeavoring to bring back his mind to a rational sense of its guilt, and to a firm hope of pardon through the intercession of our Savior. Religion, that sweet and certain comforter of human woes, at length effected a partial recovery, and restored him to a degree of tranquillity and repose; but he still continued to suffer, for years afterward, so great a misery from the shattered condition of his nerves, that he could not even compose a letter upon the most trifling and indifferent subject without the greatest labor and pain. As his feelings had never been hurt by any sense of injury received from mankind, he entertained no antipathy for his species; but as he was conscious that his

reduced state of health prevented him from keeping up any rational or pleasing intercourse with them, he felt a sort of abhorrence to society, and refused, even when advised by his physicians and intimate friends, to mingle in its pleasures, or engage in its concerns. The proposal, indeed, appeared as extravagant and absurd to his feelings, as if a man, almost choking under the convulsion of a confirmed asthma, had been told that it was not only necessary for him to breathe freely, in order to acquire perfect ease. This deplorable state of health induced him to consult several Italian and English physicians; and being advised to try the effects of a sea voyage, he set sail for Riga, where he safely arrived; but, after a residence of six months, found himself unaltered, and precisely in the same dreadful condition in which he had set sail. On his return, I was called in to his assistance. There were at this period but very few of those gloomy and noxious vapors of susperstition, which had so tormented his mind, remaining; but his body, and particularly his nervous system, was still racked with agonizing pains. I had the good fortune to afford him great relief; and when, at times, his sufferings were suspended, and his spirits enlivened by pleasing conversation, he was certainly one of the most entertaining men, both as to the vivacity of his wit, the shrewdness of his observations, the powers of his reasoning, and the solidity of his judgment, that I had ever known.

These instances clearly evince how dangerous solitude may prove to minds predisposed, by accident or nature to indulge a misdirected imagination, either upon the common subjects of life, or upon the more important and affecting topic of religion; but it must not be concluded from the observations I have already made, that a rational retirement from the vices, the vanities, and the vexations of the world, is equally unfriendly, under all circumstances, to a sickly mind. The cool and quiet repose which seclusion affords, is frequently the most

advantageous remedy which can be adopted for the recovery of a disturbed imagination. It would, indeed, be the hight of absurdity to recommend to a person suffering under a derangement of the nervous system, the diversions and dissipations of public life, when it is known, by sad experience, as well as by daily observation, that the least hurry disorders their frame, and the gentlest intercourse palpitates their hearts, and shakes their brains, almost to distraction. The healthy and robust can have no idea how violent the slightest touch vibrates through the trembling nerves of the dejected valetudinarian. The gay and healthy, therefore, seldom sympathize with the sorrowful and the sick. This, indeed, is one reason why those who, having lost the firm and vigorous tone of mind which is so essentially necessary in the intercourses of the world, generally abandon society, and seek, in the softness of solitude, a solace for their cares and anxieties; for there they frequently find a kind asylum where the soul rests free from disturbance, and in time appeases the violence of its emotions; for "the foster nurse of nature is repose." Experience, alas! sad experience, has but too well qualified me to treat of this subject. In the fond expectation of being able to re-establish my nervous system, and to regain that health which I had broken down, and almost destroyed, by intense application, I repaired to the Circle of Westphalia, in order to taste the waters of Pyrmont, and to divert the melancholy of my mind, by the company which resorts to that celebrated spring; but, alas! I was unable to enjoy the lively scene, and I walked through multitudes of the great, the elegant and the gay, in painful stupor, scarcely recognizing the features of my friends, and fearful of being noticed by those who knew me. The charms of wit, and the splendors of youthful beauty, were to me as unalluring as age and ugliness, when joined to the deformities of vice, and the fatiguing prate of senseless folly. During this miserable impotence of soul, and while I vainly sought a temporary

relief of my own calamity, I was hourly assailed by a crowd of wretched souls, who implored me to afford them my professional aid, to alleviate those pains which time, alas! had fixed in their constitutions, and which depended more on the management and reformation of their own minds, than on the powers of medicine to cure. For—

> I could not minister to a mind diseas'd,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And, with a sweet oblivious antidote,
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
> Which weigh'd upon the heart.

To avoid these painful importunities, I flew from the tasteless scenes with abrupt and angry violence; and confining myself to the solitude of my apartments, passed the lingering day in dreary dejection, musing on the melancholy group from which I had just escaped. But my home did not long afford me an asylum. I was on the ensuing day assailed by a host of hypochondriacs, attended by their respective advisers, who, while my own nervous malady was raging at its full hight, stunned me with the various details of their imaginary woes, and excruciated me the whole day with their unfounded ails and tormenting lamentations. The friendly approach of night at length relieved me from their importunities; but my spirits had been exhausted, my feelings so vexed, my patience so tried, and the sensibilities of my mind so aggravated, by the persecution I had endured, that

> "Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

fled from my eyes; and I lay restless upon my couch, alive only to my miseries, in a state of anguish more insupportable than my bitterest enemies would, I hope, have inflicted on me. About noon, on the ensuing day, while I was endeavor-

ing to procure on the sofa, a short repose, the princess Orlow, accompanied by two other very agreeable Russian ladies, whose company and conversation it was both my pride and my pleasure frequently to enjoy, suddenly entered my apartment to inquire after my health, of the state of which they had received an account only a few hours before; but such was the petulance of temper into which my disordered mind had betrayed me, that I immediately rose, and with uncivil vehemence, requested they would not disturb me. The fair intruders instantly left the room. About an hour afterward, and while I was reflecting on the impropriety of my conduct, the prince himself honored me with a visit. He placed himself on a chair close by the couch on which I lay, and, with that kind affection which belongs to his character, inquired, with the tenderest and most sympathizing concern into the cause of my disorder. There was a charm in his kindness and attention, that softened in some degree, the violence of my pains. He continued his visit for some time; and when he was about to leave me, after premising that I knew him too well to suspect that superstition had any influence in his mind, said, "Let me advise you, whenever you find yourself in so waspish and petulant a mood, as you must have been in when you turned the princess and her companions out of the room, to endeavor to check the violence of your temper; and I think you will find it an excellent expedient for this purpose, if, while any friend is kindly inquiring after your health, however averse you may be at the moment to such an inquiry, instead of driving him so uncivilly away, you would employ yourself in a silent mental repetition of the Lord's prayer; it might prove very salutary, and would certainly be much more satisfactory to your mind." No advice could be better imagined than this was to divert the emotions of impatience, by creating in the mind new objects of attention, and turning the raging current of distempered thought into a more pure and peaceful

channel. Experience, indeed, has enabled me to announce the efficacy and virtue of this expedient. I have frequently, by the practice of it, defeated the fury of petulant passions, and completely subdued many of those absurdities which vex and tease us in the hours of grief, and during the sorrows of sickness. Others also, to whom I have recommended it, have experienced from it similar effects. The prince, "my guide, philosopher and friend," a few weeks after he had given me this wise and salutary advice, consulted me respecting the difficulty he frequently labored under in suppressing the violence of those transports of affection which he bore toward his young and amiable consort, and which, in a previous conversation on philosophic subjects, I had seriously exhorted him to check, under a conviction, that a steady flame is more permanent and pure than a raging fire. He asked me, with some concern, what expedient I could recommend to him as most likely to control those emotions which happy lovers are so anxious to indulge. "My dear friend," I replied, "there is no expedient can surpass your own; and whenever the intemperance of passion is in danger of subverting the dictates of reason, repeat the Lord's prayer, and I have no doubt you will foil its fury."

When the mind is thus enabled to check and regulate the effects of the passions, and bring back the temper to its proper tone and rational basis, the serenity and calmness of solitude assists the achievement, and completes the victory. It is then so far from infusing into the mind the virulent passions we have before described, that it affords a soft and pleasing balm to the soul; and, instead of being its greatest enemy, becomes its highest blessing and its warmest friend.

Solitude, indeed, as I have already observed, is far from betraying well-regulated minds either into the miseries of melancholy or the dangers of eccentricism. It raises a healthy and vigorous imagination to its noblest production, elevates it

when dejected, calms it when disturbed, and restores it, when partially disordered, to its natural tone. It is, as in every other matter, whether physical or moral, the abuse of solitude which renders it dangerous; like every powerful medicine, it is attended when misapplied, with most mischievous consequences; but when properly administered, is pleasant in its taste, and highly salutary in its effects. He who knows how to enjoy it can—

* * * * * truly tell
To live in solitude is with truth to dwell;
Where gay content with healthy temperance meets,
And learning intermixes all its sweets;
Where friendship, elegance and arts unite
To make the hours glide social, easy, bright;
He tastes the converse of the purest mind;
Tho' mild, yet manly; and tho' plain, refin'd;
And thro' the moral world expatiates wide,
Truth as his end, and virtue as his guide.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE ON THE PASSIONS.

THE passions lose in solitude a certain portion of that regulating weight by which in society they are guided and controlled; the counteracting effects produced by variety, the restraints imposed by the obligations of civility, and the checks which arise from the calls of humanity, occur much less frequently in retirement than amidst the multifarious transactions of a busy world. The desires and sensibilities of the heart having no real objects on which their vibrations can pendulate, are stimulated and increased by the powers of imagination. All the propensities of the soul, indeed, experience a degree of restlessness and vehemence greater than they ever feel while diverted by the pleasures, subdued by the surrounding distresses, and engaged by the business of active and social life.

The calm which seems to accompany the mind in its retreat is deceitful; the passions are secretly at work within the heart; the imagination is continually heaping fuel on the latent fire, and at length the laboring desire bursts forth, and glows with volcanic heat and fury. The temporary inactivity and inertness which retirement seems to impose, may check, but can not subdue the energies of spirit. The high pride and lofty ideas of great and independent minds may be, for a while, lulled into repose; but the moment the feelings of such a character are awakened by indignity or outrage, its anger springs like an elastic body drawn from its center, and pierces with vigorous severity the object that provoked it. The perils of solitude, indeed, always increase in proportion as the sensibilities, imaginations and passions of its votaries are quick,

excursive and violent. The man may be the inmate of a cottage, but the same passions and inclinations still lodge within his heart; *his* mansion may be changed, but *their* residence is the same; and though they appear to be silent and undisturbed, they are secretly influencing all the propensities of his heart. Whatever be the cause of his retirement, whether it be a sense of undeserved misfortune, the ingratitude of supposed friends, the pangs of despised love, or the disappointment of ambition, memory prevents the wound from healing, and stings the soul with indignation and resentment. The image of departed pleasures haunts the mind, and robs it of its wished tranquillity. The ruling passion still subsists; it fixes itself more strongly on the fancy; moves with greater agitation; and becomes, in retirement, in proportion as it is inclined to vice or virtue, either a horrid and tormenting specter, inflicting apprehension and dismay, or a delightful and supporting angel, irradiating the countenance with smiles of joy, and filling the heart with peace and gladness.

Blest is the man, as far as earth can bless,
Whose measur'd passions reach no wild excess;
Who, urg'd by nature's voice, her gifts enjoys,
Nor other means than nature's force employs.
While warm with youth the sprightly current flows,
Each vivid sense with vig'rous rapture glows;
And when he droops beneath the hand of age,
No vicious habit stings with fruitless rage;
Gradual his strength and gay sensations cease,
While joys tumultuous sink in silent peace.

The extraordinary power which the passions assume, and the improper channel in which they are apt to flow in retired situations, is conspicuous from the greater acrimony with which they are in general tainted in small villages than in large towns. It is true, indeed, that they do not always explode in such situations with the open and daring violence which they exhibit in the metropolis; but lie buried, as it were,

and moldering in the bosom, with a more malignant flame. To those who only observe the listlessness and languor which distinguish the characters of those who reside in small provincial towns, the slow and uniform rotations of amusements which fill up the leisure of their lives; the confused wildness of their cares; the poor subterfuges to which they are continually resorting, in order to avoid the clouds of discontent that impend, in angry darkness, over their heads; the lagging current of their drooping spirits; the miserable poverty of their intellectual powers; the eagerness with which they strive to raise a card party; the transports they enjoy on the prospect of any new diversion or occasional exhibition; the haste with which they run toward any sudden, unexpected noise that interrupts the deep silence of their situation; and the patient industry with which, from day to day, they watch each other's conduct, and circulate reports of every action on each other's lives, will scarcely imagine that any virulence of passion can disturb the bosoms of persons who live in so quiet and seemingly composed a state. But the unoccupied time and barren minds of such characters cause the faintest emotions, and most common desires, to act with all the violence of high and untamed passions. The lowest, diversions, a cock fighting, or a pony race, make the bosom of a country 'squire beat with the highest rapture; while the inability to attend the monthly ball fills the minds of his wife and daughter with the the keenest anguish. Circumstances, which scarcely make any impression on those who reside in the metropolis, plunge every description of residents in a country village into all the extravagances of joy, or the dejection of sorrow; from the peer to the peasant, from the duchess to the dairy maid, all is rapture and convulsion. Competition is carried on for the humble honors and petty interests of a sequestered town, or miserable hamlet, with as much heat and rancor as it is for the highest dignities and

greatest emoluments of the state. Upon many occasions, indeed, ambition, envy, revenge, and all the disorderly and malignant passions, are felt and exercised with a greater degree of violence and obstinacy amidst the little contentions of clay-built cottages, than ever prevailed amidst the highest commotions of courts. Plutarch relates, that when Cæsar, after his appointment to the government of Spain, came to a little town as he was passing the Alps, his friends, by way of mirth, took occasion to say, "Can there here be any disputes for offices, any contentions for precedency, or such envy and ambition as we behold among the great in all the transactions of imperial Rome?" The idea betrayed their ignorance of human nature; while the celebrated reply of their great commander, that *he would rather be the first man in this little town, than the second even in the imperial city*, spoke the language, not of an individual, but of the species; and instructed them that there is no place, however insignificant, in which the same passions do not proportionately prevail. The humble competitors for village honors, however low and subordinate they may be, feel as great anxiety for pre-eminence, as much jealousy of rivals, and as violent envy against superiors, as agitate the bosoms of the most ambitious statesmen in contending for the highest prize of glory, of riches or of power. The manner, perhaps, in which these inferior candidates exert their passions may be less artful, and the objects of them less noble, but they are certainly not less virulent. "Having," says Euphelia, who had quitted London, to enjoy the quietude and happiness of a rural village, "been driven by the mere necessity of escaping from absolute inactivity, to make myself more acquainted with the affairs and happiness of this place, I am now no longer an absolute stranger to *rural conversation* and employments; but am far from discerning in them more innocence or wisdom than in the sentiments or conduct of those with whom I

have passed more cheerful and more fashionable hours. It is common to reproach the tea table and the park, with giving opportunities and encouragement to scandal. I can not wholly clear them from the charge, but must, however, observe, in favor of the modish prattlers, that if not by principle, we are at least by accident, less guilty of defamation than the country ladies. For, having greater numbers to observe and censure, we are commonly content to charge them only with their own faults or follies, and seldom give way to malevolence, but such as arises from injury or affront, real or imaginary, offered to ourselves. But in those distant provinces, where the same families inhabit the same houses from age to age, they transmit and recount the faults of a whole succession. I have been informed how every estate in the neighborhood was originally got, and find, if I may credit the accounts given me, that there is not a single acre in the hands of the right owner. I have been told of intrigues between beaux and toasts, that have been now three centuries in their quiet graves; and am often entertained with traditional scandal on persons of whose names there would have been no remembrance, had they not committed somewhat that might disgrace their descendants. If once there happens a quarrel between the principal persons of two families, the malignity is continued without end; and it is common for old maids to fall out about some election in which their grandfathers were competitors. Thus malice and hatred descend here with an inheritance; and it is necessary to be well versed in history, that the various factions of the country may be understood. You can not expect to be on good terms with families who are resolved to love nothing in common; and in selecting your intimates, you are, perhaps, to consider which party you most favor in the barons' wars.

Resentments and enmities burn with a much more furious flame among the thinly-scattered inhabitants of a petty village,

than amidst the ever-varying concourse of a great metropolis. The objects by which the passions are set on fire are hidden from our view by the tumults which prevail in a crowded city, and the bosom willingly loses the pains which such emotions excite when the causes which occasioned them are forgot; but in country villages, the thorns by which the feelings have been hurt are continually before our eyes, and preserve, on every approach toward them, a remembrance of the injuries sustained. An extremely devout and highly religious lady, who resided in a retired hamlet in Swisserland, once told me, in a conversation on this subject, that she had completely suppressed all indignation against the envy, the hatred, and the malice of her surrounding neighbors; for that she found they were so deeply dyed in sin, that a rational remonstrance was lost upon them; and that the only vexation she felt from a sense of their wickedness arose from the idea that her soul would at the last day be obliged to keep company with such incorrigible wretches.

The inhabitants of the country, indeed, both of the lower and middling classes, can not be expected to possess characters of a very respectable kind, when we look at the conduct of those who set them the example. A country magistrate, who has certainly great opportunities of forming the manners and morals of the district over which he presides, is in general puffed up with high and extravagant conceptions of the superiority of his wisdom, and the extent of his power; and raising his idea of the greatness of his character in an inverse proportion to his notions of the insignificance and littleness of those around him, he sits enthroned with fancied pre-eminence, the disdainful tyrant, rather than the kind protector of his neighbors. Deprived of all liberal and instructive society, confined in their knowledge both of men and things, the slaves of prejudice, and the pupils of folly; with contracted hearts and degraded faculties, the inhabitants of a country village feel all the base and ignoble passions, sordid rapacity, mean envy, and

insulting ostentation more forcibly than they are felt either in the enlarged society of the metropolis, or even in the confined circle of the monastery.

The social virtues, indeed, are almost totally excluded from cloisters, as well as from every other kind of solitary institution; for when the habits, interests and pleasures of the species are pent up by any means within a narrow compass, mutual jealousies and exasperations must prevail, every trifling immunity, petty privilege, and paltry distinction, becomes an object of the most violent contention; and increasing animosities at length reach to such a degree of virulence, that the pious flock is converted into a herd of famished wolves, eager to worry and devour each other.

The laws of every convent strictly enjoin the holy sisterhood to live in Christian charity and sincere affection with each other. I have, however, when attending these fair recluses in my professional character, observed many of them with wrinkles, that seemed rather the effect of angry perturbation, than of peaceful age, with aspects formed rather by envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, than by mild benevolence and singleness of heart. But I should do injustice if I did not declare, that I have seen some few who were strangers to such unworthy passions; whose countenances were unindented by their effects; and whose beauty and comeliness still shone in their native luster and simplicity. It was, indeed, painful to reflect upon the sufferings which these lovely innocents must endure, until the thoughts of their lost hopes, defeated happiness, and unmerited wrongs, should have changed the milky kindness of their virtuous dispositions into the gall-like bitterness of vexation and despair; until the brightness of their charming features should be darkened by the clouds of discontent, which their continued imprisonment would create; and until their cheerful and easy tempers should be perverted by the corrosions of those vindictive passions

which the jealous furies, with whom they were immured, and to whom they formed so striking a contrast, must in time so cruelly inflict. These lovely mourners, on entering the walls of a convent, are obliged to submit to the tyranny of an envious superior, or the jealousy of the older inmates, whose angry passions arise in proportion as they perceive others less miserable than themselves; and retiring, at the stated periods, from their joint persecution, they find that the gloomy solitude to which they have flown, only tends to aggravate and widen the wound it was expected to cure. It is, indeed, almost impossible for any female, however amiable, to preserve in the joyless gloom of conventual solitude, the cheering sympathies of nature. A retrospect of her past life most probably exhibits to her tortured fancy, superstition, stinging with scorpion-like severity her pious mind; love sacrificed on the altar of family pride; or fortune ruined by the avarice of a perfidious guardian; while the future presents to her view the dreary prospect of an eternal and melancholy separation from all the enjoyments of society, and a continual exposure of the petulance and ill humor of the dissatisfied sisterhood. What a disposition, however mild and gentle by nature, can preserve itself amidst such confluent dangers? How is it possible to prevent the most amiable tenderness of heart, the most lively and sensible mind from becoming, under such circumstances, a prey to the bitterness of affliction and malevolence? Those who have had an opportunity to observe the operation of the passions on the habits, humors and dispositions of recluse females, have perceived with horror the cruel and unrelenting fury with which they goad the soul, and with what an imperious and irresistible voice they command obedience to their inclination.

The passion of love, in particular, acts with much greater force upon the mind that endeavors to escape from its effects by retirement, than it does when it is either resisted or

indulged. Retirement, under such circumstances, is a childish expedient; it is expecting to achieve that, by means of a fearful flight, which it is frequently too much for the courage and the constancy of heroes to subdue. Retirement is the very nest and harbor of this powerful passion. How many abandon the gay and jovial circles of the world, renounce even the most calm and satisfactory delights of friendship and quiet, without a sigh, the most delicious and highest seasoned pleasures of society, to seek in retirement the superior joys of love? a passion in whose high and tender delights the insolence of power, the treachery of friendship, and the most vindictive malice is immediately forgot. It is a passion, when pure, that can never experience the least decay; no course of time, no change of place, no alteration of circumstances, can erase or lessen the ideas of that bliss which it has once imprinted on the heart. Its characters are indelible. Solitude, in its most charming state, and surrounded by its amplest powers, affords no resource against its anxieties, its jealous fears, its tender alarms, its soft sorrows, or its inspiringly tumultuous joys. The bosom that is once deeply wounded by the barbed dart of real love, seldom recovers its tranquillity, but enjoys, if happy, the highest of human delights; and, if miserable, the deepest of human torments. But, although the love-sick shepherd fills the lonely valleys, and the verdant groves, with the softest sighs, or severest sorrows, and the cells of the monasteries and convents resound with heavy groans, and deep-toned curses against the malignity of this passion, solitude may, perhaps, for a while suspend, if it can not extinguish its fury. Of the truth of this observation, the history of those unfortunate, but real lovers, Abelard and Eloisa, furnishes a memorable instance.

In the twelfth century, and while Louis the Gross filled the throne of France, was born, in the retired village of Palais, in Brittany, the celebrated Peter Abelard. Nature had lavished

the highest perfections both on his person and his mind; a liberal education improved, to their utmost possible extent, the gifts of nature; and he became, in a few years, the most learned, elegant and polite gentleman of his age and country. Philosophy and divinity were his favorite studies; and, lest the affairs of the world should prevent him from becoming a proficient in them, he surrendered his birthright to his younger brethren, and traveled to Paris, in order to cultivate his mind under that great professor, William des Champeaux. The eminence he attained as professor, while it procured him the esteem of the rational and discerning, excited the envy of his rivals. But, beside his uncommon merit as a scholar, he possessed a greatness of soul which nothing could subdue. He looked upon riches and grandeur with contempt; and his only ambition was to render his name famous among learned men, and to acquire the reputation of the greatest doctor of his age. But when he had attained his seven-and-twentieth year of age, all his philosophy could not guard him against the shafts of love. Not far from the place where Abelard read his lectures, lived a canon of the church of Notre Dame, named Fulbert, whose niece, the celebrated Eloisa, had been educated under his own eye with the greatest care and attention. Her person well proportioned, her features regular, her eyes sparkling, her lips vermilion and well formed, her complexion animated, her air fine, and her aspect sweet and agreeable; she possessed a surprising quickness of wit, an incredible memory, and a considerable share of learning, joined with great humility and tenderness of disposition; and all these accomplishments were attended with something so graceful and moving, that it was impossible for those who saw her not to love her. The eye of Abelard was charmed, and his whole soul intoxicated with the passion of love, the moment he beheld and conversed with this extraordinary woman; and he laid aside all other engagements to attend to this passion.

He was deaf to the calls both of reason and philosophy, and thought of nothing but her company and conversation. An opportunity, fortunate for his love, but fatal to his happiness, soon occurred. Fulbert, whose affection for his niece was unbounded, willing to improve to the highest degree the excellency of those talents which nature had so bountifully bestowed on her, engaged Abelard as her preceptor, and received him in that character into his house. A mutual passion strongly infused itself into the hearts of both pupil and preceptor. She consented to become his mistress, but for a long time refused to become his wife. The secret of their loves could not remain long concealed from the eyes of Fulbert, and the lover was dismissed from his house; but Eloisa flew with rapture to his arms, and was placed under the protection of his sister, where she remained until, from the cruel vengeance which her uncle exercised on the unfortunate Abelard, she was induced, at his request to enter into the convent of Argenteuil, and he into the monastery of St. Gildas. In this cloister, the base of which was washed by the waves of a sea less turbulent than the passions which disturbed his soul, the unfortunate Abelard endeavored, by the exercises of religion and study, to obliterate all remembrance of his love; but his virtue was too feeble for the great attempt. A course of many years, however, had passed in penitence and mortification, without any communication between them, and further time might possibly have calmed in a still greater degree the violence of their feelings; but a letter which Abelard wrote to his friend Philintus, in order to comfort him under some affliction which had befallen him, in which he related his affection for Eloisa with great tenderness, fell into her hands, and induced her to break through the silence which had so long prevailed, by writing to him a letter, the contents of which revived in his mind all the former furies of his passion. Time, absence, solitude and

prayer, had in no degree diminished the amiable tenderness of the still lovely Eloisa, or augmented the fortitude of the unfortunate Abelard. The composing influence of religion seems to have made an earlier impression upon his feelings than it did upon those of Eloisa; but he continually counteracted its effects, by comparing his former felicity with his present torments; and he answered Eloisa's letter, not as a moral preceptor, or holy confessor, but as a still fond and adoring lover; as a man whose wounded feelings were in some degree alleviated by a recollection of his former joys; and who could only console the sorrows of his mistress, by avowing an equal tenderness, and confessing the anguish with which their separation rent his soul. The walls of Paraclete resounded his sighs less frequently, and re-echoed less fervently with his sorrows, than those of St. Gildas; for his continued solitude, so far from affording him relief, had administered an aggravating medicine to his disease; and afforded that vulture, grief, greater leisure to tear and prey upon his disordered heart. "Religion," says he, "commands me to pursue virtue, since I have nothing to hope for from love; but love still asserts its dominion in my fancy, and entertains itself with past pleasures; memory supplies the place of a mistress. Piety and duty are not always the fruits of retirement. Even in deserts, when the dew of heaven falls not on us, we love what we ought no longer to love. The passions, stirred up by solitude, fill those regions of death and silence; and it is very seldom that what ought to be is truly followed there, and that God only is loved and served."

The letters of Eloisa were soft, gentle and endearing; but they breathed the warmest language of tenderness and unconquerable passion. "I have your picture," says she, "in my room. I never pass by it without stopping to look at it; and yet, when you were present with me, I scarce even cast my

eyes upon it. If a picture, which is but a mute representation of an object, can give such pleasure, what can not letters inspire? Letters have souls; they have in them all that force which expresses the transports of the heart; they have all the fire of our passions; they can raise them as much as if the persons themselves were present; they have all the softness and delicacy of speech, and sometimes a boldness of expression even beyond it. We may write to each other; so innocent a pleasure is not forbidden us. Let us not lose, through negligence, the only happiness which is left to us, and the only one, perhaps, which the malice of our enemies can never ravish from us. I shall read that you are my husband, and you shall see me address you as a wife. In spite of all your misfortunes, you may be what you please in your letters. Letters were first invented for comforting such solitary wretches as myself. Having lost the pleasure of seeing you, I shall compensate this loss by the satisfaction I shall find in your writings; there I shall read your most secret thoughts; I shall carry them always about me; I shall kiss them every moment. If you can be capable of jealously, let it be for the fond curiosity I shall bestow on your letters, and envy only the happiness of those rivals. That writing may be no trouble to you; write always to me carelessly, and without study; I had rather read the dictates of the heart than of the brain. I can not live if you do no tell me you always love me. You can not but remember, (for what do not lovers remember?) with what pleasure I have passed whole days in hearing you discourse; how, when you were absent, I shut myself up from every one, to write to you; how uneasy I was till my letter had come to your hands; what artful management was required to engage confidants. This detail, perhaps, surprises you, and you are in pain for what will follow; but I am no longer ashamed that my passion has had no bounds for you; for I have done more than all this, I have hated myself that

I might love you. I came hither to ruin myself in a perpetual imprisonment, that I might make you live quiet and easy. Nothing but virtue, joined to a love perfectly disengaged from the commerce of the senses, could have produced such effects. Vice never inspires any thing like this. How did I deceive myself with the hopes that you would be wholly mine when I took the vail, and engaged myself to live forever under your laws! For, in being professed, I vowed no more than to be yours only; and obliged myself voluntarily to a confinement in which you denied to place me. Death only then can make me leave the place where you have fixed me; and then too, my ashes shall rest here, and wait for yours, in order to show my obedience and dèvotedness to you to the latest moment possible."

Abelard, while he strove, in his reply, to adhere to the dictates of reason, betrayed the lurking tenderness of his heart. "Deliver yourself, Eloisa," says he, "from the shameful remains of a passion which has taken too deep root. Remember that the least thought for any other than God is an adultery. If you could see me here, pale, meager, melancholy, surrounded by a band of persecuting monks, who feel my reputation for learning as a reproach of their stupidity and ignorance, my emaciated figure as a slander on their gross and sensual corpulency, and my prayers as an example for their reformation; what would you say to the unmanly sighs, and unavailing tears by which they are deceived? Alas! I am bowed down by the oppressive weight of love, rather than contrition for past offenses. O! my Eloisa, pity me, and endeavor to free my laboring soul from its captivity! If your vocation be, as you say, my wish, deprive me not of the merit of it by your continual inquietudes; tell me that you will honor the habit which covers you by an inward retirement. Fear God, that you may be delivered from your frailties. Love him, if you would advance in virtue.

Be not uneasy in the cloister, for it is the dwelling of saints; embrace your bands, they are the chains of Jesus, and he will lighten them, and bear with you, if you bear them with humility and repentance. Consider me no more, I entreat you, as a founder, or as a person in any way deserving your esteem; for your encomiums do but ill agree with the multiplying weaknesses of my heart. I am a miserable sinner, prostrate before my Judge; and when the rays of grace break on my troubled soul, I press the earth with my lips, and mingle my sighs and tears in the dust. Couldst thou survey thy wretched lover thus lost and forlorn, thou wouldst no longer solicit his affection. The tenderness of thy heart would not permit thee to interpose an earthly passion, which can only tend to deprive him of all hopes of heavenly grace and future comfort. Thou wouldst not wish to be the object of sighs and tears, which ought to be directed to God alone. Canst thou, my Eloisa, become the confederate of my evil genius, and be the instrument to promote sins' yet unfinished conquest? What, alas! couldst thou not achieve with a heart, the weaknesses of which you so well know? But, oh! let me conjure you by all the sacred ties, to forget forever the wretched Abelard, and thereby contribute to his salvation. Let me entreat you by our former joys, and by our now common misfortunes, not to abet my destruction. The highest affection you can now show me, is to hide your tenderness from my view, and to renounce me forever. O, Eloisa, be devoted to God alone; for I here release you from all engagements to me.

The conflict between love and religion tore the soul of Eloisa with pangs far more violent and destructive. There is scarcely a line of her reply to Abelard, that does not show the dangerous influence which solitude had given to the concealed, but unsmothered, passion that glowed within her breast. "Vailed as I am," she exclaims, "behold in what a disorder you have plunged me! How difficult it is to fight always for duty against

inclination! I know the obligation which this sacred vail has imposed on me; but feel more strongly the power which a long and habitual passion has gained over my heart. I am the victim of almighty love; my passion troubles my mind, and disorders my senses. My soul is sometimes influenced by the sentiments of piety which my reflections inspire, but the next moment I yield myself up to the tenderness of my feelings, and to the suggestions of my affection. My imagination riots with wild excursion in the scenes of past delights. I disclose to you one moment what I would not have told you a moment before. I resolve no longer to love you; I consider the solemnity of the vow I have made, and the awfulness of the vail I have taken; but there arises, unexpectedly, from the bottom of my heart, a passion which triumphs over all these notions, and, while it darkens my reason, destroys my devotion. You reign in all the close and inward retreats of my soul; and I know not how nor where to attack you with any prospect of success. When I endeavor to break the chains which bind me so closely to you, I only deceive myself, and all my efforts serve only to confirm my captivity, and rivet our hearts more firmly to each other. O! for pity's sake comply with my request; and endeavor by this means, to make me renounce my desires by showing me the obligation I am under to renounce you. If you are still a lover or a father, oh! help a mistress, and give comfort to the distraction of an afflicted child. Surely these dear and tender names will excite the emotion either of pity or of love. Gratify my request; only to continue to write to me, and I shall continue to perform the hard duties of my station without profaning that character which my love for you induced me to assume. Under your advice and admonition I shall willingly humble myself, and submit with penitence and resignation to the wonderful providence of God who does all things for our sanctification; who, by his grace purifies all that is vicious and corrupt in our natures; and, by

the inconceivable riches of his mercy, draws us to himself against our wishes, and by degrees opens our eyes to discern the greatness of that bounty which at first we are incapable of understanding. Virtue is too amiable not to be embraced when you reveal her charms, and vice too hideous not to be avoided when you show her deformities. When you are pleased, everything seems lovely to me. Nothing is frightful or difficult when you are by. I am only weak when I am alone, and unsupported by you; and, therefore, it depends on you alone that I may be such as you desire. Oh! that you had not so powerful an influence over all my soul! It is your fears, surely, that make you thus deaf to my entreaties, and negligent of my desires; but what is there for you to fear? When we lived happily together, you might have doubted whether it was pleasure or affection that united me to you; but the place from which I now indite my lamentations must have removed that idea, if it ever could find a place in your mind. Even within these gloomy walls, my heart springs toward you with more affection than it felt, if possible, in the gay and glittering world. Had pleasure been my guide, the world would have been the theater of my joys. Two-and-twenty years only of my life had worn away when the lover on whom my soul doated was cruelly torn form my arms; and at that age female charms are not generally despised; but, instead of seeking to indulge the pleasures of youth, your Eloisa, when deprived of thee, renounced the world, suppressed the emotions of sense, at a time when the pulses beat with the warmest ardor, and buried herself within the cold and cheerless region of the cloister. To you she consecrated the flower of her charms; to you she now devotes the poor remains of faded beauty, and dedicates to heaven and to you, her tedious days and widowed nights in solitude and sorrow."

The passion, alas! which Eloisa thus fondly nourished in her bosom, like an adder, to goad and sting her peace of mind,

was very little of a spiritual nature; and the walls of Paraclete only re-echoed more fervent sighs than she had before breathed, and witnessed a more abundant flow of tears than she had shed in the cells of Argentuil, over the memory of departed joys with her beloved Abelard. Her letters, indeed, show with what toilsome but ineffectual anxiety she endeavored to chasten her mind, and support her fainting virtue, as well by her own reasoning and reflection, as by his counsels and exhortations; but the passion had tenaciously rooted itself at the very bottom of her heart; and it was not until the close of life that she was able to repress the transports of her imagination, and subdue the wild sallies of her fond and fertile fancy. Personally separated from each other, she indulged a notion that her love could not be otherwise than pure and spiritual; but there are many parts of her letters which show how much she was deceived by this idea; for in all the fancied chastity of their tender and too ardent loves—

"Back thro' the pleasing maze of sense, she ran,
And felt within the slave of love and man."

The wild and extravagant excesses to which the fancy and the feelings of Eloisa were carried, were not occasioned merely by the warm impulses of unchecked nature; but were forced, to the injury of virtue, and the destruction of reason, by the rank hotbed of monastic solitude. The story of these celebrated lovers, when calmly examined, and properly understood, proves how dangerous it is to recede entirely from the pleasures and occupations of social life, and how deeply the imagination may be corrupted, and the passions inflamed, during a splenetic and ill-prepared retirement from the world. The phrenzies which follow disappointed love, are of all others the most likely to settle into habits of the deepest melancholy. The finest sensibilities of the heart, the purest tenderness of the soul, when joined with a warm constitution,

and an ardent imagination, experience from interruption and control the highest possible state of exasperation. Solitude confirms the feelings such a situation creates; and the passions and inclinations of a person laboring under such impressions, are more likely to be corrupted and inflamed by the leisure of retirement, than they would be even by engaging in all the lazy opulence and wanton plenty of a debauched metropolis.

The affection which Petrarch entertained for Laura, was refined, elevated and virtuous, and differed, in almost every ingredient of it, from the luxurious fondness of the unfortunate Eloisa; but circumstances separated him from the beloved object; and he labored during many years of his life, under the oppression of that grievous melancholy which disappointment uniformly inflicts. He first beheld her as she was going to the church of the monastery of St. Claire. She was dressed in green, and her gown was embroidered with violets. Her face, her air, her gait, appeared something more than mortal. Her person was delicate, her eyes tender and sparkling, and her eyebrows black as ebony. Golden locks waved over her shoulders whiter than snow, and the ringlets were woven by the fingers of love; her neck was well formed, and her complexion animated by the tints of nature, which art vainly attempts to imitate. When she opened her mouth, you perceived the beauty of pearls, and the sweetness of roses. She was full of graces. Nothing was so soft as her looks, so modest as her carriage, so touching as the sound of her voice. An air of gaiety and tenderness breathed around her; but so pure and happily tempered, as to inspire every beholder with the sentiments of virtue; for she was chaste as the spangled dewdrop on the thorn. Such was the description given of this divine creature by her enslaved lover. But unfortunately for his happiness, she was at this time married to Hugues de Sade, whose family was originally of Avignon,

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and held the first offices there. Notwithstanding the sufferings he underwent from the natural agitation of an affection so tender as that which now engrossed his soul, he owns that Laura behaved to him with kindness so long as he concealed his passion; but when she discovered that he was captivated with her charms, she treated him with great severity; avoiding every place it was likely he would frequent, and concealing her face under a large vail whenever they accidentally met. The whole soul of Petrarch was overthrown by this disastrous passion, and he felt all the visitation of unfortunate love as grievously as if it had been founded upon less virtuous principles. He endeavored to calm and tranquilize the troubles of his breast by retiring to the celebrated solitude of Vaucluse, a place in which nature delighted to appear under a form the most singular and romantic; "But, alas!" says he, "I knew not what I was doing. The resource was ill suited to the safety I sought. Solitude was incapable of mitigating the severity of my sorrows. The griefs that hung around my heart, consumed me like a devouring flame. I had no means of flying from their attacks. I was alone, without consolation, and in the deepest distress, without even the counsel of a friend to assist me. Melancholy and despair shot their poisoned arrows against my defenseless breast, and I filled the unsoothing and romantic vale with my sighs and lamentations. The muse indeed conveyed my sufferings to the world; but while the poet was praised, the unhappy lover remained unpitied and forlorn."

The love which inspired the lays of Petrarch was a pure and perfect passion of the heart; and his sufferings were rendered peculiarly poignant by a melancholy sense of the impossibility of ever being united with the object of it; but the love of Abelard and Eloisa was a furious heat of wild desire. The passion flows clear or muddied, peaceful or violent, in proportion to the sources from which it springs.

When it arises from pure and unpolluted sources, its stream is clear, peaceful and surrounded with delights; but when its source is foul, and its course improperly directed, it foams and rages, overswells its banks, and destroys the scenes which nature intended it to fertilize and adorn. The different effects produced by the different kinds of this powerful passion, have, on observing how differently the character of the same person appears when influenced by the one or the other of them, given rise to an idea that the human species are possessed of two souls; the one leading to vice, and the other conducting to virtue. A celebrated philosopher has illustrated this notion by the following story:

A virtuous prince, of an heroic soul, capable of love and friendship, made war upon a tyrant, who was in every respect his reverse. It was the happiness of our prince to be as great a conqueror by his clemency and bounty, as by his arms and military virtue. Already he had won over to his party several potentates and princes, who had before been subject to the tyrant. Among those who still adhered to the enemy there was a prince, who, having all the advantages of person and merit, had lately been made happy in the possession and mutual love of the most beautiful princess in the world. It happened that the occasion of the war called the new-married prince to a distance from his beloved princess. He left her secure, as he thought, in a strong castle, far within the country; but, in his absence, the place was taken by surprise, and the princess brought a captive to the quarters of the heroic prince. There was in the camp a young nobleman, the favorite of the prince; one who had been educated with him, and was still treated by him with perfectly familiarity. Him he immediately sent for, and with strict injunctions, committed the captive princess to his charge; resolving she should be treated with that respect which was due to her rank and merit. It was the same young lord who had discovered her disguised

among the prisoners, and learnt her story; the particulars of which he now related to the prince. He spoke in ecstasy on this occasion; telling the prince how beautiful she appeared even in the midst of sorrow; and, though disguised under the meanest habit, yet how distinguished by her air and manner from every other beauty of her sex. But what appeared strange to our young nobleman was, that the prince during this whole relation, discovered not the least intention of seeing the lady, or satisfying that curiosity which seemed so natural on such an occasion. He pressed him, but without success. "Not see her, sir!" said he, wondering, "when she was so much handsomer than any woman you have yet seen!" "For that very reason," replied the prince, "I would rather decline the interview; for should I, upon this bare report of her beauty, be so charmed as to make the first visit at this urgent time of business, I may upon sight, with better reason be induced, perhaps, to visit her when I am more at leisure; and so again and again, until at last I may have no leisure left for my affairs." "Would you, sir, persuade me then," said the young nobleman, smiling, "that a fair face can have such power as to force the will itself, and constrain a man in any respect to act contrary to what he thinks becoming him? Are we to hearken to the poets, in what they tell us of that incendiary love and his irresistible flame? A real flame we see burns all alike; but that imaginary one of beauty hurts only those that are consenting. It effects no otherwise than as we ourselves are pleased to allow it. In many cases we absolutely command it, as when relation and consanguinity are in the nearest degree. Authority and law we see can master it; but it would be vain, as well as unjust, for any law to intermeddle or prescribe, was not the case voluntary, and our will entirely free." "How comes it then," replied the prince, "that if we are thus masters of our choice, and free at first to admire and love where we approve, we can not afterward as well cease to

love whenever we see cause? This latter liberty you will hardly defend; for I doubt not you have heard of many who, though they were used to set the highest value on liberty before they loved, yet afterward, were necessitated to serve in the most abject manner, finding themselves constrained, and bound by a stronger chain than any of iron or of adamant." "Such wretches," replied the youth, "I have often heard complain, who, if you will believe them, are wretched indeed, without means or power to help themselves. You may hear them in the same manner complain grievously of life itself; but though there are doors enough at which to go out of life, they find it convenient to keep still where they are. They are the very same pretenders who, through this plea of irresistible necessity, make bold with what is another's, and attempt unlawful beds; but the law, I perceive, makes bold with them in its turn, as with other invaders of property. Neither is it your custom, sir, to pardon such offenses; so that beauty itself, you must allow, is innocent and harmless, and can not compel any one to do amiss. The debauched compel themselves, and unjustly charge their guilt on love. They who are honest and just can admire and love whatever is beautiful, without offering it any thing beyond what is allowed. How, then, is it possible, sir, that one of your virtue should be in pain on any such account, or fear such a temptation? You see, sir, I am sound and whole after having beheld the princess. I have conversed with her; I have admired her in the highest degree; yet, I am myself still, and in my duty, and shall be ever in the same manner at your command." "It is well," replied the prince, "keep yourself so; be ever the same man, and look to your fair charge carefully, as becomes you; for it may so happen, in the present situation of the war, that this beautiful captive may stand us in good stead." The young nobleman then departed to execute his commission; and immediately took such care of the captive princess, that she

seemed as perfectly obeyed, and had every thing which belonged to her in as great splendor as in her own principality, and in the hight of her fortune. He found her in every respect deserving, and saw in her a generosity of soul exceeding even her other charms. His studies to oblige her, and to soften her distress, made her, in return, desirous to express her gratitude. He soon discovered the feelings of her mind; for she showed, on every occasion, a real concern for his interest; and when he happened to fall ill, she took such tender care of him herself, and by her servants, that he seemed to owe his recovery entirely to her friendship. From these beginnings, insensibly, and by natural degrees, as may easily be conceived, the youth fell desperately in love. At first he offered not to make the least mention of his passion to the princess, for he scarce dared to believe it himself. But time and the increasing ardor of his passion subdued his fears, and she received his declaration with an unaffected trouble, and real concern. She reasoned with him as a friend, and endeavored to pursuade him to subdue so improper and extravagant a flame. But in a short time he became outrageous, and talked to her of *force*. The princess was alarmed by his audacity, and immediately sent to the prince to implore his protection. The prince received the information with the appearance of more than ordinary attention; sent instantly for one of his first ministers, and directed him to return with the princess' domestic, and tell the young nobleman that *force* was not to be used to such a lady; but that he might use *persuasion*, if he thought it was proper so to do. The minister, who was, of course, the inveterate enemy of his prince's favorite, aggravated the message, inveighed publicly against the young nobleman for the grossness of his misconduct, and even reproached him to his face with having been a traitor to the confidence of his prince, and a disgrace to his nation. The minister, in short, conveyed the message of his master in such

virulent and angry terms, that the youth looked on his case as desperate; fell into the deepest melancholy; and prepared himself for that fate which he was conscious he well deserved. While he was thus impressed with a sense of his misconduct, and the danger to which it had exposed him, the prince commanded him to attend a private audience. The youth entered the closet of the prince covered with the deepest confusion. "I find," said he, "that I am now become dreadful to you indeed, since you can neither see me without shame, nor imagine me to be without resentment. But away with all these thoughts from this time forward! I know how much you have suffered on this occasion. I know the power of love; and am no otherwise safe myself, than keeping out of the way of beauty. I alone am to blame; for it was I who unhappily matched you with that unequal adversary; who gave you that impracticable task; who imposed on you that hard adventure, which no one yet was ever strong enough to accomplish." "In this, sir, as in all else," replied the youth, "you express that goodness which is so natural to you. You have compassion, and can allow for human frailties; but the rest of mankind will never cease to upbraid me; nor shall I ever be forgiven, even were I able ever to forgive myself. I am reproached by my nearest friends; and I must be odious to all mankind wherever I am known. The least punishment I can think due to me is banishment forever from your presence; for I am no longer worthy of being called your friend." "You must not think of banishing yourself forever," replied the prince; "but trust me, if you will retire only for a while, I shall so order matters, that you shall return with the applause even of those who are now your enemies, when they find what a considerable service you shall have rendered both to them and me." Such a hint was sufficient to revive the spirits of the despairing youth. He was transported to think that his misfortunes could be turned in any way to the advantage of the prince. He

entered with joy into the scheme his royal friend had contrived for the purpose of restoring him to his former fame and happiness, and appeared eager to depart and execute the directions that were given to him. "Can you then," said the prince, "resolve to quit the charming princess?" "O, sir," replied the youth, with tears in his eyes, "I am now well satisfied that I have in reality within me two distinct separate souls. This lesson of philosophy I have learnt from that villainous sophister, love; for it is impossible to believe that, having one and the same soul, it should be actually good and bad; passionate for virtue and vice, desirous of contraries. No; there must of necessity be two; and when the good soul prevails, we are miserable. Such was my case. Lately the ill-soul was wholly master, and I was miserable; but now the good prevails, by your assistance, and I am plainly a new creature, with quite another apprehension, another reason and another will."

He who would be master of his appetites, must not only avoid temptation, but vigilantly restrain the earliest shoots of fancy, and destroy the first blooms of a warm imagination. It is the very nature of confidence to be always in danger. To permit the mind to riot in scenes of fancied delights, under an idea that reason will be able to extinguish the flames of desire, is to nurse and foster the sensual appetites, which, when guided by the cool and temperate voice of nature alone, are seldom raised to an improper hight. The natural current of the blood, even in the warmest constitutions, and under the most torrid zone, would keep an even, temperate course, were it not accelerated by such incentives. Youth, indeed, despises this species of reasoning, and imputes it to the sickness of satiety, or the coldness of old age. I have, however, in general, observed, that those who seek these incitements to what they improperly call love, possess a rayless eye, a hollow cheek, a palsied hand, a pallid countenance; and these symp-

toms of faded splendor and withered strength, unquestionably prove that they have not consulted nature in their gay pursuits; for nature has not planted any propensities in the human frame, which lead it to early ruin, or premature decay. The blame which is so unjustly thrown on temperament and constitution, belongs to the indulgence of false and clamorous passions, those which sensual fancies, and lascivious ideas have raised to the destruction of chastity and health.

Monastic institutions produce in this respect, incalculable mischiefs. The sexes, whom these religious prisons seclude from the free and unconfined intercourse of society, suffer their imaginations to riot without restraint or discipline, in proportion to the violence imposed on their actions. A thousand boyish fancies, eager appetites, and warm desires, are perpetually playing truant, and the chastity of the soul is corrupted. To effect the conquest of the passion of love, it is absolutely necessary that the evil suggestions of the imagination should be first silenced; and he who succeeds in quelling the insurrections of that turbulent inmate, or in quieting its commotions, achieves an enterprise at once difficult and glorious. The holy Jerome checked the progress of many disorderly passions which he found rising in his breast; but the passion of love resisted all his opposition, and followed him, with increasing fury, even into the frightful cavern to which he retired to implore, in humble prayer and solitary abstraction, the mercies of his God. The solitude, however remote, to which the demon of sensuality is admitted, is soon crowded with legions of tormenting fiends. John, the anchorite of the deserts of Thebais, wisely addressed his solitary brethren, "If there be any among you who, in his pride, conceives that he has entirely renounced the devil and all his works, he should learn that it is not sufficient to have done this merely by his lips, by having resigned his worldly dignities, and by dividing his possessions among the poor; for, unless he has

also abandoned his sensual appetites, his salvation can not be secure. It is only by purifying our bosoms from the pernicious influence of this master passion, that we can ever hope to counteract the machinations of Satan, and to guard our hearts from his dangerous practices. Sin always introduces itself under the guidance of some guilty passion; some fond desire; some pleasing inclination; which we willingly indulge, and by that means suffer the enemy of peace to establish his unruly dominion in our souls. Then tranquillity and real happiness quit their abode in our hearts, and all is uproar and anarchy within. This must be the fate of all who permit an evil spirit to seat itself on the throne of our hearts, and to scatter around the poisonous seeds of wild desire and vicious inclinations." But love once indulged in bright and rapturous fancies, fills the mind with such high and transporting ideas of supreme bliss, that the powers of reason are seldom, if ever, capable of making head against its fascinations. The hermit and the monk, who, from the nature of their situations, can not taste its real charms, ought, if it were for that reason alone, to stifle at their birth the earliest emotions of this inspiring passion; for the indulgence of it must prove fatal to the virtue, and of course destructive to the peace, of every recluse. The impossibility that such characters can listen with any propriety to the dictates of this delightful passion, shows in the strongest manner the impolicy and absurdity of those institutions, on the members of which celibacy is enjoined. The happiness of every individual, as well as the civil and religious interests of society, are best promoted by inducing the endearments of sense to improve the sympathies, tenderness and affections of the human heart. But these blessings are denied to the solitary fanatic, who is condemned to endure the suppression of his passions, and prevented from indulging, without endangering his principles, both the desires of sense, and the dreams of fancy. He can not form

that delightful union of the sexes, where sentiments of admiration are increased by prospects of personal advantage; where private enjoyment arises from a sense of mutual merit; and the warmest beams of love are tempered by the refreshing gales of friendship. The grosser parts of this innate and glowing passion can alone occupy his fancy; and the sentiments it instills, instead of refining his desires, and meliorating his affections, tend, through the operation of his foul and corrupted imagination, to render his appetites still more depraved. He is as ignorant of its benefits, as he is of its chaste and dignified pleasures; and totally unacquainted with its fine sensibilities, and varied emotions, his bosom burns with the most violent rage; his mind wallows in images of sensuality; and his temper frets itself, by unjustly accusing the tempter as the author of his misery. If the luxurious cogitations of such a character were dissipated by the pleasures and pursuits of busy life; if the violence of his passions were checked by laborious exercises; and if habits of rational study enabled him to vary the uniformity of retirement, and to substitute the excursions of mental curiosity, and moral reflections, instead of that perpetual recurrence of animal desire by which he is infected, the danger we have described would certainly be reduced; but without such aids, his self-denials, his penitence, his prayers, and all the austere discipline of the monkish and ascetic school will be ineffectual. Celibacy, indeed, instead of assisting, as their disciples mistakingly conceive, to clear the soul from its earthly impurities, and raise it to divine brightness and sublimity, drags it down to the basest appetites and lowest desires. But matrimony, or that suitable and appropriate union of the sexes which prevails under different circumstances, according to the manner and custom of different societies, leads, when properly formed, to the highest goal of human bliss.

The mischievous effects which the celibacy and solitude of

monastic institutions produce on that passion which arises so spontaneously between the sexes in the human heart, will appear unavoidable, when it is considered how absurdly the founders of these religious retreats have frequently endeavored to guard against the danger. The partitions which divide virtues from their opposite vices are so slender and conjoined, that we scarcely reach the limits of the one before we enter, to a certain degree, the confines of the other. How ridiculous, therefore, is it to conceive, that frequent meditation on forbidden pleasures, should be at all likely to eradicate impure ideas from the mind. And yet the Egyptian monastics were enjoined to have these rules constantly in their contemplation; first, that their bosoms must remain unagitated by the thoughts of love; that they should never permit their fancies to loiter on voluptuous images; that female beauty in its fairest form, and most glowing charms, should be incapable of exciting in their hearts the least sensation; and that, even during the hours of sleep, their minds should continue untainted by such impure affections. The chastity of these solitary beings was, on some occasions, actually tried by experiment; but the consequences which resulted from such irrational discipline, were directly the reverse of those it was intended to produce. The imagination was vitiated, and the inclination rendered so corrupt, that neither the examples nor the precepts of the more enlightened ages were able to correct their manners, or reclaim them from the machinations of the unclean spirit. Numberless, indeed, and horrid, are the instances recorded by Ruffinus, and other writers, of the perversions of all sense and reason, of all delicacy and refinement, of all virtue and true holiness, which prevailed in the ascetic solitudes of every description, while the nuptial state was held incompatible with the duties of religion, and the sexes separated from each other, that they might more piously, and with less interruption, follow its dictates. Some of the fathers

of the church defined female celibacy to be the only means of living a chaste and godly life amidst the impurities of a sinful world, and regaining, during the perdition of gross mortality, the semblance of the soul's celestial origin. The holy, happy tie of matrimony they consider as a cloak to the indulgence of impure desires, and launched their anathemas against it as a hateful institution. Even the eloquent and pious Chrysostom says, "That a double purpose was intended to be attained by the institution of marriage, *viz*: the propagation of the species, and the gratification of sexual affection; but that, as population had sufficiently covered the face of the earth, the first had become no longer necessary; and that it was the duty of the sexes rather to conquer their affections by abstinence and prayer, than indulge them under so thin a disguise." The human soul, he admits, must, in a state of celibacy, subsist under a perpetual warfare, and the faculties be in continual ferment; but contends that piety exists in proportion to the difficulties which the sufferer surmounts. The holy fathers seem, from the whole strain of their exhortations and reasonings, to have considered female chastity in a very serious point of view; and there can be no doubt but that it is the brightest jewel and most becoming ornament of the sex; but these reverend teachers were so blinded by their zeal, that they lost all sight of nature, and mistakingly conceived that the Great Creator had planted affections in our hearts, and passions in our breasts only to try our tempers in suppressing their turbulence, rather than promote our happiness, and to answer the ends of his creation, by a sober and rational indulgence of them.

But nature will not be argued out of her rights; and these absurd doctrines introduced into every monastic institution throughout Europe a private intercourse, hostile from its evil example to the interests both of morality and religion. The nuns of the convent of Argenteuil, who chose Eloisa for their

abbess, were, in all probability, influenced in their choice by the recollections of her former frailty, and their knowledge of the present ruling passion of her heart; they meant to provide the abbey with a superior who, if she were not inclined to promote, would feel no disposition to interrupt, their intrigues. The fact certainly was, that during the time Eloisa presided over the convent, the conduct of the nuns was so extremely licentious, that Sugger, abbot of St. Dennis, complained of their irregularities to Pope Honorius in such a manner, as to induce his holiness to give the abbot possession of it; and he immediately expelled the negligent prioress and her intriguing sisters, and established in their place a monastery of his own order. Strong suspicions may, perhaps, prevail against the virtue and integrity of Eloisa's character, from the dissoluteness which existed in this society; but she was certainly not included by name in the articles of accusation which the abbot of St. Dennis transmitted upon this subject to the court of Rome; and there is every reason to believe that these irregularities were carefully concealed from her knowledge. When this lovely victim was presented with the vail, some persons, who pitied her youth, and admired her beauty, represented to her the cruel sacrifice she would make of herself by accepting it; but she immediately exclaimed, in the words of Cornelia, after the death of Pompey the Great—

"Oh, my lov'd lord! our fatal marriage draws
On thee this doom, and I the guilty cause:
Then while thou go'st th' extremes of fate to prove,
I'll share that fate, and expiate thus my love!"

And accepted the fatal present with a constancy not to have been expected in a woman who had so high a taste for pleasures which she might still enjoy. It will, therefore, be easily conceived, that her distress, on being ignominiously expelled from this retreat, was exceedingly severe. She applied to

Abelard to procure her some permanent asylum, where she might have the opportunity of estranging herself from all earthly weaknesses and passions; and he, by the permission of the bishop of Troyes, resigned to her the house and the chapel of Paraclete, with its appendages, where she settled with a few sisters, and became herself the foundress of a nunnery. Of this monastery she continued the superior until she died; and whatever her conduct was among the licentious nuns of Argenteuil, she lived so regular in this her new and last retreat, and conducted herself with such exemplary prudence, zeal and piety, that all her former failings were forgot, her character adored by all who knew her, and her monastery in a short time enriched with so great a variety of donations, that she was celebrated as the ablest cultivator of the virtues of forgiveness and Christian charity then existing. The bishop of the district behaved to her as if she had been his own daughter; the neighboring priors and abbots treated her with all the tenderness and attention of a real sister; and those who were distressed and poor, revered her as their mother. But all her cares, and all her virtues, could not protect her against the returning weakness of her heart. "Solitude," says she, "is insupportable to a mind that is ill at ease; its troubles increase in the midst of silence, and retirement hightens them. Since I have been shut up within these walls, I have done nothing but weep for our misfortunes; this cloister has resounded with my cries, and, like a wretch condemned to eternal slavery, I have worn out my days in grief and sighing."

The useful regulations imposed by the wisdom of St. Benedict, upon the votaries of monastic retirement, were soon neglected. Abstinence and prayer were succeeded by luxury and impiety. The revenues of the several orders had, by the increased value of property, become so great, that they were expended in purchasing a remission of those duties which

their founders had enjoined. The admission of the poor laity relieved the initiated members from the toil of cultivating the demesne lands, and produced a system of indolence and laziness. They exchanged their long fast and unsavory diet, for frequent feasts and the richest repasts; substituted indolent pride for laborious humility; and lost entirely their original piety and virtue. Abelard, indeed, and some few other abbots of the tenth century, endeavored to restore the ancient discipline, but they were reviled and persecuted with the most vindictive malice by their cotemporaries. The duke of Brittany, in order to secure Abelard from the rage with which he was pursued, for exercising qualities which ought to have procured him admiration and esteem, gave him the convent of St. Gildas, as an asylum from their hated. The high character which this monastery comparatively enjoyed for regularity and good order, excited a hope that he might there find rest from his vexations, and consolation for his griefs. But, instead of finding it the seat of wisdom and piety, and the mansion of tranquillity, he discovered the most dissolute manners and abandoned conduct prevailing in every part of the convent. His mild and rational attempts to reclaim these disorderly brethren, were so far from producing the desired effect upon their minds, that it only provoked their rage, and gave new edge to their malice. Foiled in their endeavors, by conspiracy and calumny, to dispossess him of his situation, they attempted several times, at their common repasts, to infuse poison into his victuals; and at length, dreadful to relate! actually administered, in the sacramental cup, the poisoned chalice to his lips, but which he was miraculously prevented from tasting. It is, indeed, impossible to read the description he has given of his dreadful situation in this wild and savage community, without shuddering at the idea how much an irrational solitude tends to corrupt the manners and deprave the heart. "I live," says he, in his letter to Philin-

tus, "in a barbarous country, the language of which I do not understand. I have no conversation, but with the rudest people. My walks are on the inaccessible shore of a sea which is perpetually stormy. My monks are only known by their dissoluteness, and living without any rule or order. Ah! Philintus, were you to see my habitation, you would rather think it a slaughter-house than a convent. The doors and walks are without any ornament except the heads of wild boars, the antlers of stags, the feet of foxes, and the hides of other animals, which are nailed up against them. The cells are hung with the skins of victims destroyed in the chase. The monks have not so much as a bell to wake them, and are only roused from their drowsiness by the howling of dogs and the croaking of ravens. Nothing disturbs their laziness or languor but the rude noises of hunting; and their only alternatives are riot and rest. But I should return my thanks to heaven if that were their only fault. I endeavor in vain to recall them to their duty; they all combine against me; and I only expose myself to continual vexations and dangers. I imagine I see every moment a naked sword hanging over my head. Sometimes they surround me, and load me with the vilest abuse; and even when they abandon me, I am still left to my own dreadful, tormenting thoughts." This single example would be sufficient to prove the extraordinary dominion which solitude has over the human mind. It is, indeed, unless it be managed with great good sense, the complete nursery of mischief. The mind is without those numerous incentives to action which are continually occurring in the busy world; and nothing can contribute to produce irregular and disorderly passions more than the want of some pursuit by which the heart is interested and the mind employed. The minds of idle persons are always restless; their hearts never at perfect ease; their spirits continually on the fret; and their passions goaded to the most unwarrantable excess.

Idleness, even in social life, inflicts the severest torments on the soul; destroys the repose of individuals; and, when general, frequently endangers the safety of the state. Timotheus, an Egyptian monk, surnamed the Cat, a short time after the Eutychian Controversy, in the year 457, felt an ambition to fill the episcopal and patriarchal chair. The splenetic restlessness which prevailed among the monks in their several monastic solitudes, seemed to present to his observing eye proper instruments for the execution of his scheme. He was conscious, from his profound knowledge of the human character, that if men who had so long remained in uneasy and dissatisfied indolence, could be provoked to activity, their zeal would be as turbulent as their former life had been lazy and supine; and that their dispositions might be easily turned to the accomplishment of his wishes. The better to effect his purpose, he clothed himself in a white garment, crept silently in the dead of night to the cells of his companions, and. through a tube, which concealed his voice, while it magnified the sound of it, hailed every monk by his name. The sound seemed to convey the voice of heaven to the susperstitious ears of the awakened auditors; and the sagacious and enterprising trumpeter did not fail to announce himself as an ambassador of heaven, sent in the name of the Almighty to command the monks to assemble immediately, to consult on the most likely mode of deposing the Nestorian heretic, Proterus, and of raising the favored and orthodox Timotheus to the episcopal throne. The idea of being thus elected to execute this pious rebellion, roused all the sleeping powers of these solitary and hitherto idle fanatics; they rose tumultuously at the sacred signal; proclaimed him as a heaven-elected patriarch; solicited him, with friendly violence, not to refuse the promised boon; and burning with all the ardor of expected success, marched, in a few days, under the banner of the imposter, to Alexandria, where they inspired the members of other monasteries

with their own delusion, and created throughout Egypt the wildest and most tremendous commotions. The populace caught the religious phrenzy, and joined in vast numbers the monastic rout. Assisted by this desperate rabble, Timotheus proceeded to the principal church of Alexandria, where he was, by a preconcerted arrangement, pompously received by two deposed bishops, and ordained the metropolitan of the whole Egyptian territory. Proterus was astonished at this sudden interruption, and hurled his anathemas with great art and dexterity against the impious audacity of the obscure monastic, who had thus dared to depart from the humility of his station, and to invade, with his indolent brethren, the rights of sovereignty; but being well aware of the fury with which this description of men generally act when they are once set in motion, and being informed of the vast multitude by which they had been joined, he thought it prudent to quit his palace, and to retire to the sacred shelter of the church of St. Quirinus. Heathens and barbarians had heretofore respected this venerable sanctuary; but, upon the present occasion, it was incapable of giving safety to its aged refugee. The furious troops of the holy imposter burst with irresistible violence through the walls of this consecrated edifice, and with their daggers drank the blood of the innocent pontiff, even upon that altar, the very sight of which ought to have paralyzed the hand of guilt. His surrounding and numerous friends, particularly six ecclesiastics of great eminence, learning and piety, shared the fate of their unhappy master, and were found, when the dreadful massacre was over, clinging with fondness, in the arms of death, round his mangled body. But it was necessary for the murderers to caluminate the purity of that life which they had thus violently and injuriously destroyed. They accordingly dragged the corpse of this virtuous patriarch to the most public part of the city, and, after the grossest abuse of his character, and most scandalous misrepresen-

tation of his conduct, hung it on an elevated cross, and exposed it to the brutal insults of the misguided and deluded populace. To complete this unmanly outrage, they at length committed the torn and mangled remains of this excellent prelate to the flames, and hurled his ashes, amidst the most opprobrious and insulting epithets, into the darkened air; exclaiming, with horrid imprecations, that the mortal part of such a wretch was not entitled to the right of sepulcher, or even the tears of friends. So furious and undaunted, indeed, were all the oriental monks, when once roused from their monastic lethargy, that even the soldiers of the Greek emperors cautiously avoided meeting them in the field. The fury by which they were actuated was so blind, that the pious Chrysostom, the warmest and most zealous advocate for monastic institutions, trembled at his approach. This celebrated father of the church was born in the year 344, of one of the first families of the city of Antioch, and added new luster to their fame by his virtues and his eloquence. Having finished his studies with wonderful success, under Libanius, the greatest rhetorician of the age, he devoted himself to the study of the law; but religion having planted itself deeply in his mind, he quitted all secular concerns, and retired into solitude among the mountains in the vicinity of the city, where, in the dreary caves, he devoted two entire years to penitence and prayer. Ill health, however, obliged him to return to Antioch; he began to preach the Word, and was soon followed by a host of disciples. The life of this excellent pastor was an example to his whole flock. He endeavored to drive away the wolves from the folds, and sent missionaries even into Scythia, to convert its inhabitants to Christianity. These missions, and his various charities, required either considerable revenues, or the most rigid economy; and the holy patriarch was contented to live in the extremest poverty, that he might have the better opportunity of

relieving the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. The character and conduct of this virtuous pontiff soon gained him the hearts of his people, and he set himself earnestly to reform the many abuses which at this time prevailed at Constantinople. The severity and vehemence, however, with which he declaimed against the pride, the luxury, and the rapacity of the great; the zeal with which he endeavored to reform the vices and misconduct of the clergy; and the eagerness he discovered for the conversion of heretics, created him a multitude of enemies; and Eutropius, the favorite of the Emperor Arcadius; Gainas, the tyrant to whom he had refused protection for the Arians; Theophilus, of Alexandria, the patron of the Origenists; and the disciples of Arius, whom he banished from Constantinople, entered into a conspiracy against him; and an occasion soon happened, which gave them the opportunity of taking ample vengeance. The intrepid preacher, convinced that while he declaimed against vice in general, the peculiar vices which prevailed in the court of the Empress Eudoxia, and the personal misconduct of the empress herself, called aloud for his severest animadversions, he took every opportunity of exposing them to the public abhorrence. The resentment of the court encouraged the discontent of the clergy and monks of Constantinople, who had been very severely disciplined by the zeal of the archbishop. He had condemned from the pulpit the domestic females of the clergy of Constantinople, who, under the name of servants, or sisters, afforded a perpetual occasion either of sin or scandal. The silent and solitary ascetics, who had secluded themselves from the world, were entitled to the warmest approbation of Chrysostom; but he despised and stigmatized, as the disgrace of their holy profession, the crowd of degenerate monks, who, from some unworthy motives of pleasure or profit, so frequently infested the streets of the metropolis. To the voice of persuasion, the archbishop was obliged to add the lesson

of authority; and in his visitation through the Asiatic provinces, he deposed thirteen bishops of Lydia and Phrygia; and declared that a deep corruption of simony and licentiousness had infected the whole episcopal order. These bishops also entered into the confederacy above mentioned, and the excellent Chrysostom was studiously represented as the intolerable tyrant of the eastern church. This ecclesiastical conspiracy was managed by the Archbishop of Alexandria, who, by the invitation of Eudoxia, landed at Constantinople with a stout body of Egyptian mariners, to encounter the populace, and a train of dependent bishops, to secure, by their voices, a majority of a synod. The synod was convened in the suburbs of Chalcedon, and was called the Oak; in which Chrysostom was accused of treason against the empress; rudely arrested, and driven into exile; from whence, however, he was in two days recalled; but, upon a repetition of his imputed offenses, was again banished to the remote and desolate town of Cucusus, among the ridges of Mount Taurus, in the Lesser Armenia. On his way to this place, he was detained by sickness at Cesarea, and at length confined to his bed. The bishop of Cesarea, who had long entertained a secret enmity against him, unmoved by his fallen fortunes and helpless state, stirred up the lazy monks of the surrounding monasteries to vengeance against him. The fury with which they issued from their respective cells was incredible; like the sleeping powder of the present age, they burst into immediate conflagration and explosion at the touch of that hand by which they were fired, and directing their heated animosity against the dying Chrysostom, surrounded his house and threatened, that if he did not immediately depart, they would involve it in flames, and bury him in its ruins. The soldiers of the garrison were called out to protect the life of this virtuous ecclesiastic; and, on their arrival at the scene of action, very courteously requested the enraged monks to be

quiet and depart; but the request was treated with contempt and defiance; and it was by the humane resolution of Chrysostom himself that this tumult was quelled; for, rather than the blood of his fellow-creatures should be shed on his account, he desired a litter might be procured, into which, in his almost expiring state, he was roughly laid, and, by his departure from the city, escaped the fury which thus assailed his life. It is evident, from these facts, that the irrational solitude of monastic institutions, particularly that which prevailed in the early ages of Christianity in the eastern parts of the converted world, instead of rendering the votaries of it mild, complacent and humane, filled their minds with the wildest notions, and most uncharitable and acrimonious passions, and fostered in their hearts the most dangerous and destructive vices. It is truly said, by a very elegant writer and profound observer of men and manners, that monastic institutions unavoidably contract and fetter the human mind; that the partial attachment of a monk to the interests of his order, which is often incompatible with that of other citizens, the habit of implicit obedience to the will of a superior, together with the frequent return of the wearisome and frivolous duties of the cloister, debase his faculties, and extinguish that generosity of sentiment and spirit which qualifies men for thinking and feeling justly, with respect to what is proper in life and conduct; and that Father Paul of Venice was, perhaps, the only person educated in a cloister, that ever was altogether superior to its prejudices, or who viewed the transactions of men, and reasoned concerning the interests of society with the enlarged sentiments of a philosopher, with the discernment of a man conversant in affairs, and with the liberality of a gentleman. Depraved, however, as this order of men has ever been, it was to their prayers and masses that all the princes and potentates of more than half the discovered regions of the earth confided their salvation, and expected, from their intercession, divine

favor from the fountain of all goodness and truth. But the fears which these artful and intriguing ecclesiastics raised in the weak or guilty minds of their cotemporaries, instead of being quieted by the conciliatory and comforting doctrines of the gospel of Christ, were converted to the purposes of their own sordid avarice, and made subservient to the enjoyment of their vices, and the advancement of their power. They inculcated the notion that the surest passport to eternal bliss was to overwhelm them with riches, and to indulge them with extraordinary privileges; and every haughty noble, or despotic sovereign, who was anxious to gratify his own wanton pleasures, and capricious vices, at the expense of his people's prosperity and happiness, endeavored to reconcile himself to his offended God, by bribing these ambitious and greedy monastics to grant them absolution for their deepest crimes. Their history exhibits, in full view, the melancholy truth, that their hearts were corrupted by the worst passions that disgrace humanity, and that the discipline of the convent was seldom productive of a single virtue. Enthusiasts, indeed, of every description, whose sentiments and feelings are continually at war with the dictates of nature, and who renounce all the pleasing sympathies, gentle endearments, kind connections, and rational enjoyments of life, are not likely to entertain any great anxiety for the interest or happiness of others, or to feel the least commisseration for their sorrows. Occupied by sordid and selfish pursuits, they must hate and despise a society, to the lively enjoyments of which they look back with such keen regret. When the mind, alas! has numbed its sense of social joys, and become a stranger to the delightful charms of sweet domestic love; when all affection for the world and its concerns has been studiously expelled from the bosom, and no kind feeling or social inclination suffered to fill the vacant heart; when man has separated himself from his species, and has not united his soul with his Creator, he has lost all power

of being happy himself, or of communicating happiness to others.

The bishop exceeded the inferior clergy in every kind of profligacy, as much as in opulence and power; and, of course, their superintending and visitorial authority was not exerted to lessen or restrain the prevalence of those vices which their evil example contributed so greatly to increase. Time and chance sometimes produce extraordinary events; and if a really pious, vigilant and austere prelate arose amidst the general dissoluteness of the age, his single effort to reclaim these solitary ecclesiastics was seldom attended with success. These fathers, indeed, frequently scrutinized with great minuteness into the practices of the convents; and as they were not so able to detect the guilt of incontinency, as some philosophers of the present age pretend to be, by the lines and features of the face, they proceeded upon evidence less delicate, perhaps, but certainly more demonstrative and unerring.

The celebrated Boccace has, by his witty and ingenious tales, very severely satirized the licentiousness and immorality which prevailed during his time in the Italian monasteries; but, by exposing the scandalous lives, and lashing the vices of the monks, nuns and other orders of the Catholic clergy, he has been decried as a contemner of religion, and as an enemy to true piety. Cotemporary historians have, also, delivered the most disgusting accounts of their intemperance and debauchery. The frailty, indeed, of the female monastics was even an article of regular taxation; and the holy father did not disdain to fill his coffers with the price of their impurities. The frail nun, whether she had become immured within a convent, or still resided without its walls, might redeem her lost honor, and be reinstated in her former dignity and virtue, for a few ducats. This scandalous traffic was carried to an extent that soon destroyed all sense of morality, and hightened

the hue of vice. Ambrosius, bishop of Camadoli, a prelate of extraordinary virtue, visited various convents in his diocese, but, in inspecting their proceedings, he found no traces of virtue, or even of decency, remaining in any one of them; nor was he able, with all the sagacity he exercised on the subject, to reinfuse the smallest particle of these qualities into the degenerated minds of the sisterhood.

The reform of the nunneries was the first step that distinguished the government of Sextus IV, after he ascended the Papal throne, at the close of the fifteenth century. Bossus, a celebrated canon, of the strictest principles, and most inflexible disposition, was the agent selected by his holiness for this arduous achievement. The Genoese convents, where the nuns lived in open defiance of all the rules of decency and precepts of religion, were the first objects of his attention. The orations which he publicly uttered from the pulpit, as well as the private lectures and exhortations which he delivered to the nuns from the confessional chair, were fine models, not only of his zeal and probity, but of his literature and eloquence. They breathed in the most impressive manner, the true spirit of Christian purity; but his glowing representations of the bright beauties of virtue, and the dark deformities of vice, made little impressions upon their corrupt hearts. Despising the open calumnies of the envious, and the secret hostilities of the guilty, he proceeded, in spite of all discouragement and opposition, in his highly honorable pursuit; and, at length, by his wisdom and assiduity, beheld the fairest prospects of success daily opening to his view. The rays of hope, however, had scarcely beamed upon his endeavors, when they were immediately overclouded by disappointment. The arm of magistracy, which he had wisely called upon to aid the accomplishment of his design, was enervated by the venality of its hand; and the incorrigible objects of his solicitude having

freed themselves by bribery from the terror of the civil power, contemned the reformer's denunciation of eternal vengeance hereafter, and relapsed into their former licentiousness and depravity. A few, indeed, among the great number of nuns who inhabited these guilty convents, were converted by the force of his eloquent remonstrances, and became afterward highly exemplary by the virtue and piety of their lives; but the rest abandoned themselves to their impious courses; and though more vigorous methods were, in a short time, adopted against the refractory monastics, they set all attempts to reform them at defiance. The modes, perhaps, in which their vices were indulged, changed with the character of the age; and as manners grew more refined, the gross and shameful indulgences of the monks and nuns were changed into a more elegant and decent style of enjoyment. Fashion might render them more prudent and reserved in their intrigues; but their passions were not less vicious, nor their dispositions less corrupt.

The disorderly manners of these solitary devotees were among the principal causes that produced the reformation. There is a point beyond which even depravity can not go in corrupting the manners of the age. The number and power of the monastics, or, as they were at that time called, the regular clergy, were certainly great, and their resistance to the approaches of reformation obstinate; but the temper of the times had changed, and the glorious and beneficial event was at length accomplished. The Catholics viewed the dismemberment of their church as a fatal stroke to their interest and power; but it has since been confessed, by every candid and rational member of this communion, to be an event which has contributed to advance morals to a higher degree of perfection than they had ever before attained since the introduction of Christianity, and to restore the discipline of the church to some portion of its original purity.

The pure spirit of the gospel of Christ breathes forth a holy religion, founded on meekness, charity, kindness and brotherly love; but fanaticism, when joined to a systematic and irrational solitude, only produces the rank and poisonous fruits which we have already described. The trivial, querulous, and intolerant superstitions, which, during so many ages, eclipsed the reason and morals of mankind, and obscured in clouds of lust and cruelty, the bright rays of evangelical truth, were the sad effects of irrational solitude. The best affections of nature were perverted or suppressed; all the gentle offices of humanity were neglected; moral sentiments despised; and the angel voice of piety unheard, or converted into the violent vociferations of hatred, and the cries of persecution. The loud clangors of pretended orthodoxy resounded with sanguinary hostilities from shore to shore; the earth was deluged with the blood of those who dared to deny, or even to doubt, the absurd and idle dogmas which the monks every where invented; and their horrid barbarities were attempted to be justified by propagating the notion that severity with heretics was the only mode of preserving the true faith. Oh! how blind is human folly! How obdurate are hearts vitiated by pride! How can that be the true faith which tears asunder every social tie; annihilates all the feelings of nature; places cruelty and horror on the throne of humanity and love, and scatters ferocious fury and insatiable hatred through the paths of life! But we may now indulge a pleasing hope, that the period is at hand, when the sacred temple of religion, purified by the labors of learned and truly pious men, from the foul stains with which fanaticism and ambition have so long defaced it, shall be restored to its own divine simplicity; and only the voice of gentleness, of love, of peace, of virtue, and of goodness, be heard within its walls. Then will every Christian be truly taught the only means by which his days may be useful

and his life happy; and Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Protestants, and every really religious class of men, will unite in acts of sincere benevolence and universal peace. No austere, gloomy and dispiriting duties; no irrational penances and unnatural mortification, will be enjoined; no intolerant cruelties be inflicted; no unsocial institutions established; no rites of solitary selfishness be required; but reason and religion, in divine perfection, will reassume their reign, and unaffected and sincere devotion will occupy every mind; the Almighty will be worshiped *in spirit* and *in truth;* and we shall be convinced that the wicked "are like the troubled sea when it can not rest; but that the work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness quietude and assurance forever." To effect this, a rational retirement from the tumults of the world will be occasionally necessary, in order to *commune with our own hearts, and be still,* and to dispose our minds to such a train of thinking, as shall prepare us, when the giddy whirl of life is finished, for the society of more exalted spirits

Oh! would mankind but make fair truth their guide,
And force the helm from prejudice and pride,
Were once these maxims fix'd, that God's our friend,
Virtue our good, and happiness our end,
How soon must reason o'er the world prevail,
And error, fraud and superstition fail!
None would hereafter, then, with groundless fear,
Describe th' Almighty cruel and severe;
Predestinating some, without pretense,
To heaven; and some to hell, for no offense;
Inflicting endless pains for transient crimes,
And favoring sects or nations, men or times.
To please him, none would foolishly forbear,
Or food, or rest, or itch in shirts of hair;
Or deem it merit to believe, or teach,
What reason contradicts or can not reach,

None would fierce zeal for piety mistake,
Or malice, for whatever tenet's sake;
Or think salvation to one sect confin'd,
And heaven too narrow to contain mankind.
No more would brutal rage disturb our peace,
But envy, hatred, war and discord cease;
Our own and other's good each hour employ,
And all things smile with universal joy;
Fair virtue then, with pure religion join'd,
Would regulate and bless the human mind,
And man be what his Maker first design'd.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE DANGER OF IDLENESS IN SOLITUDE.

IDLENESS is truly said to be the root of all evil; and solitude certainly encourages in the generality of its votaries this baneful disposition. Nature has so framed the character of man, that his happiness essentially depends on his passions being properly interested, his imagination busied, and his faculties employed; but these engagements are seldom found in the vacant scenes and tedious hours of retirement from the world, except by those who have acquired the great and happy art of furnishing their own amusements; an art, which, as we have already shown, can never be learnt in the irrational solitude of caves and cells.

The idleness which solitude is so apt to induce, is dangerous in proportion to the natural strength, activity and spirit of the mind; for it is observed that the highest characters are frequently goaded by that restlessness which accompanies leisure, to acts of the wildest outrage and greatest enormity. The ancient legislators were so conscious that indolence, whether indulged in solitude or in society, is the nurse of civil commotion, and the chief instigator of moral turpitude, that they wisely framed their laws to prevent its existence. Solon observing that the city was filled with persons who assembled from all parts on account of the great security in which the people live in Attica, that the country withal was poor and barren, and being conscious that merchants, who traffic by sea, do not use to transport their goods where they can have nothing in exchange, turned the attention of the citizens to manufactures; and for this purpose made a law, that he who

was three times convicted of idleness, should be deemed *infamous;* that no son should be obliged to maintain his father if he had not taught him a trade; that trades should be accounted *honorable;* and that the council of the Areopagus should examine into every man's means of living, and chastise the idle with the greatest severity. Draco conceived it so necessary to prevent the prevalency of a vice to which man is by nature prone, and which is so destructive to his character, and ruinous to his manners, that he punished idleness with death. The tyrant Pisistratus, as Theophrastus relates, was so convinced of the importance of preventing idleness among his subjects, that he made a law against it, which produced at once industry in the country, and tranquillity in the city. Pericles, who, in order to relieve Athens from a number of lazy citizens, whose lives were neither employed in virtuous actions, nor guarded from guilt by habits of industry, planted colonies in Chersonesus, Naxos, Andros, Thrace and even in Italy, and sent them thither; for this sagacious statesman saw the danger of indulging this growing vice, and wisely took precautions to prevent it. Nothing, indeed, contributes more essentially to the tranquillity of a nation, and to the peaceful demeanor of its inhabitants, than those artificial wants which luxury introduces; for, by creating a demand for the fashionable articles, they engage the attention, and employ the hands of a multitude of manufacturers and artificers, who, if they were left in that restless indolence which the want of work creates, would certainly be unhappy themselves, and in all probability would be fomenting mischief in the minds of others. To suspend, only for one week, the vast multitudes that are employed in the several mechanical trades and manufactories in Great Britain, would be to run the risk of involving the metropolis of that great, flourishing and powerful country once more in flames; for it would be converting the populace into an aptly disposed train of combustible matter,

which being kindled by the least spark of accidental enthusiasm, by the heat of political faction, or, indeed, by their own internal fermentation, would explode into the most flagrant enormities. Nature, it is said, abhors a *vacuum;* and this old peripatetic principle may be properly applied to the intellect, which will embrace any thing, however absurd or criminal, rather than be wholly without an object. The same author also observes, that every man may date the predominance of those desires that disturb his life, and contaminate his conscience, from some unhappy hour when too much leisure exposed him to their incursions; for that *he* has lived with little observation, either on himself or others, who does not know, that to be idle is to be vicious. "Many writers of eminence in physic," continues this eminent writer, whose works not only disclose his general acquaintance with life and manners, but a profound knowledge of human nature, "have laid out their diligence upon the consideration of those distempers to which men are exposed by particular states of life, and very learned treatises have been produced upon the maladies of the camp, the sea and the mines. There are, indeed, few employments which a man accustomed to academical inquiries and medical refinements, would not find reason for declining, as dangerous to health, did not his learning or experience inform him, that almost every occupation, however inconvenient or formidable, is happier and safer than *a life of sloth.* The necessity of action is not only demonstrable from the fabric of the body, but evident from observation of the universal practice of mankind; who for the preservation of health in those whose rank or wealth exempts them from the necessity of lucrative labors, have invented sports and diversions, though not of equal use to the world with manual trades, yet of equal fatigue to those who practice them, and differing only from the drudgery of the husbandman or manufacturer, as they are acts of choice, and therefore performed without the painful sense of compul-

sion. The huntsman rises early, pursues his game through all the dangers and obstructions of the chase, swims rivers, and scales precipices, till he returns home, no less harassed than the soldier, and has, perhaps, sometimes incurred as great hazard of wounds and death; yet, he has no motive to excite his ardor; he is neither subject to the command of a general, nor dreads the penalties of neglect or disobedience; he has neither profits nor honors to expect from his perils and conquests; but acts with the hope of mural or civic garlands, and must content himself with the praise of his tenants and companions. But such is the constitution of man, that *labor is its own reward;* nor will any external incitements be requisite, if it be considered how much happiness is gained, and how much misery escaped, by frequent and violent agitation of the body. Ease is the most that can be hoped from a sedentary and inactive habit; but ease is a mere neutral state, between pain and pleasure. The dance of spirits, the bound of vigor, readiness of enterprise, and defiance of fatigue, are reserved for him that braces his nerves, and hardens his fibers; that keeps his limbs pliant with motion; and by frequent exposure, fortifies his frame against the common accidents of cold and heat. With ease, however, if it could be secured, many would be content; but nothing terrestrial can be kept at a stand. Ease, if it is not rising into pleasure, will be settling into pain; and whatever hopes the dreams of speculation may suggest, of observing the proportion between retirement and labor, and keeping the body in a healthy state by supplies exactly equal to its weight, we know that, in effect, the vital powers, unexcited by motion, grow gradually languid, decay and die. It is necessary to that perfection of which our present state is capable, that the mind and body should both be kept in action; that neither the faculties of the one nor the other should be suffered to grow lax or torpid for want of use; that neither health can be purchased by voluntary sub-

mission to ignorance, nor knowledge cultivated at the expense of that health, which must enable it to give pleasure to its possessor, or assistance to others. It is too frequently the pride of students, to despise those amusements which give to the rest of mankind strength of limbs and cheerfulness of heart. Solitude and contemplation, are, indeed, seldom consistent with such skill in common exercises or sports, as is necessary to make them practiced with delight; and no man is willing to do that of which the necessity is not pressing, when he knows that his awkwardness but makes him ridiculous. I have always admired the wisdom of those by whom our female education was instituted, for having contrived that all women, of whatever condition, should be taught some arts of manufacture, by which the vacuities of recluse and domestic leisure may be filled up. These arts are more necessary, as the weakness of their sex, and the general system of life, debar ladies from many enjoyments which by diversifying the circumstances of men, preserve them from being cankered by the rust of their own thoughts. I know not how much of the virtue and happiness of the world may be the consequence of this judicious regulation. Perhaps the most powerful fancy might be unable to figure the confusion and slaughter that would be produced by so many piercing eyes and vivid understandings, turned loose upon mankind, with no other business than to sparkle and intrigue, to perplex and destroy. For my own part, whenever chance brings within my observation a knot of misses busy at their needles, I consider myself as in the school of virtue; and though I have no extraordinary skill in plain work, or embroidery, look upon their operations with as much satisfaction as their governess, because I regard them as providing a security against the most dangerous ensnarers of the soul, by enabling them to exclude idleness from their solitary moments, and with idleness, her attendant train of passions, fancies, chimeras, fears, sorrows and desires.

Ovid and Cervantes will inform them that love has no power but on those whom he catches unemployed; and Hector, in the Iliad, when he sees Andromache overwhelmed with tears, sends her for consolation to the loom and the distaff. Certain it is, that wild wishes, and vain imaginations, never take such firm possession of the mind, as when it is found empty and unemployed. Idleness, indeed, was the spreading root from which all the vices and crimes of the oriental nuns so luxuriantly branched. Few of them had any taste for science, or were enabled by the habits either of reflection or industry to charm away the tediousness of solitude, or to relieve that weariness which must necessarily accompany their abstracted situation. The talents with which nature had endowed them were uncultivated; the glimmering lights of reason were obscured by a blind and headlong zeal; and their temper soured by the circumstances of their forlorn condition. Certain it is, that the only means of avoiding unhappiness and misery in solitude, and, perhaps, in society also, is to keep the mind continually engaged in or occupied by, some laudable pursuit. The earliest professors of a life of solitude, although they removed themselves far from the haunts of men, among "caverns deep and deserts idle," where nature denied her sons the most common of her blessings, employed themselves in endeavoring to cultivate the rude and barren soil during those intervals in which they were occupied in the ordinary labors of religion, and even those whose extraordinary sanctity confined them the whole day in their cells, found the necessity of filling up their leisure, by exercising the manual arts for which they were respectively suited. The rules, indeed, which were originally established in most of the convents, ordained that the time and attention of a monk should never be for a moment vacant or unemployed; but this excellent precept was soon rendered obsolete; and the sad consequences which resulted from its non-observance, we have already, in some degree, described.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

The anxiety with which I have endeavored to describe the advantages and the disadvantages which, under particular circumstances, and in particular situations, are likely to be experienced by those who devote themselves to solitary retirement, may, perhaps, occasion me to be viewed by some as its romantic panegyrist, and by others as its uncandid censor. I shall, therefore, endeavor, in this concluding chapter, to prevent a misconstruction of my opinion, by explicitly declaring the inferences which ought, in fairness, to be drawn from what I have said.

The advocates for a life of uninterrupted society, will, in all probability, accuse me of being a morose and gloomy philosopher; an inveterate enemy to social intercourse; who, by recommending a melancholy and sullen seclusion and interdicting mankind from enjoying the pleasures of life, would sour their tempers, subdue their affections, annihilate the best feelings of the heart, pervert the noble faculty of reason, and thereby once more plunge the world into that dark abyss of barbarism, from which it has been so happily rescued by the establishment and civilization of society.

The advocates for a life of continual solitude will most probably, on the other hand, accuse me of a design to deprive the species of one of the most pleasing and satisfactory delights by exciting an unjust antipathy, raising an unfounded alarm, depreciating the uses and aggravating the abuses of solitude; and by these means endeavoring to encourage that spirit of licentiousness and dissipation which so strongly marks the degeneracy, and tend to promote the vices of the age.

The respective advocates for these opinions, however, equally

mistake the intent and view I had in composing this treatise. I do sincerely assure them, that it was very far from my intention to cause a relaxation of the exercise of any of the civil duties of life; to impair, in any degree, the social dispositions of the human heart; to lesson any inclination to rational retirement; or prevent the beneficent practice of *self-communion*, which solitude is best calculated to promote. The fine and generous philanthropy of that mind which, entertaining notions of universal benevolence, seeks to feel a love for, and to promote the good of the whole human race, can never be injured by an attachment to domestic pleasures, or by cultivating the soft and gentle affections which are only to be found in the small circles of private life, and can never be truly enjoyed except in the bosom of love, or the arms of friendship; nor will an occasional and rational retirement from the tumults of the world lessen any of the noble sympathies of the human heart; but, on the contrary, by enlarging those ideas and feelings which have sprung from the connections and dependencies which its votary may have formed with individuals, and by generalizing his particular interests and concerns, may enable him to extend the *social principle* and increase the circle of his benevolence:

God loves from whole to parts; but human soul
Must rise from *individual* to *whole*.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake:
The center mov'd, a circle straight succeeds;
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbor, first it will embrace:
His country next; and next, all human race.

The chief design of this work was to exhibit the necessity of combining the uses of solitude with those of society. to show, in the strongest light, the advantages they may mutually derive from each other; to convince mankind of the danger of running into either extreme; to teach the advocate

for uninterrupted society how highly all the social virtues may be improved, and its vices easily abandoned, by habits of solitary abstraction; and the advocate for continual solitude, how much that indocility and arrogance of character which is contracted by a total absence from the world, may be corrected by the urbanity of society, and by the company and conversation of the learned and polite.

Petrarch, while in the prime of life, and amidst the happiest exertions of his extraordinary genius, quitted all the seducing charms of society, and retired from love and Avignon, to indulge his mind in literary pursuits, and to relieve his heart from the unfortunate passion by which it was enthralled. No situation, he conceived, was so favorable for these purposes as the highly romantic and delightful solitude of Vaucluse. It was situated within view of the Mediterranean sea, in a little valley, inclosed by a semicircular barrier of rocks, on a plane as beautiful as the vale of Tempe. The rocks were high, bold and grotesque; and the valley was divided by a river, along the banks of which were meadows and pastures of a perpetual verdure. A path, on the left side of the river, led, by gentle windings, to the head of this vast amphitheater. At the foot of the highest rock, and directly in front of the valley, was a prodigious cavern, hollowed by the hand of nature, from whence arose a spring almost as celebrated as that of Helicon. The gloom of the cavern, which was accessible when the waters were low, was tremendous. It consisted of two excavations; the one forming an arch of sixty feet high; and the other, which was within, of thirty feet. In the center of this subterraneous rock was an oval basin, of one hundred and eight feet diameter, into which that copious stream which forms the river Sorgia rises silently, without even a jet or bubble. The depth of this basin has eluded all attempts to fathom it. In this charming retreat, while he vainly endeavored, during a period of twenty years, to forget, he enabled himself to endure the absence of his beloved Laura,

and to compare, with the highest satisfaction, the pure pleasures of rural retirement with the false joys of a vicious and corrupted court, the manners and principles of which, indeed, he had always had good sense enough to discover and despise. But this solitude, with all its charms, could not at length prevent him from returning to the more splendid and busy scenes of public life. The advantages he had derived from a retreat of twenty years, would, he conceived, enable him to mix with the world without the danger of being corrupted by its vices; and after reasoning with himself for some time in this way, he suddenly abandoned the peaceful privacy of Vaucluse, and precipitated himself into the gayest and most active scenes of a luxurious city. The inhabitants of Avignon were amazed to behold the hermit of Vaucluse, the tender fugitive from love, the philosophic contemner of society, who could scarcely exist, except in the midst of romantic rocks and flowery forests, shining all at once the bright star of the fashionable hemisphere, and the choice spirit of every private and public entertainment:

We 're sadly ignorant, when we hope to find
In shades a med'cine for a troubled mind;
Wan grief will haunt us wheresoe'er we go,
Sigh in the breeze, and in the streamlet flow:
There pale inaction pines his life away,
And satiate, curses the return of day;
There love, insatiate, rages wild with pain,
Endures the blast, or plunges in the main:
There superstition broods o'er all her fears,
And yells of demons in the zephyr hears.
He who a hermit is resolv'd to dwell,
And bids a social life a long farewell,
Is impious * * * *

It has already been observed, upon the authority of a very accurate and profound observer of nature, that a very extraordinary temperament of mind and constitution of body are required to sustain, with tranquillity and endurance, the various fatigues of continued solitude; and certain it is, that a human creature who is constantly pent up in seclusion,

must, if he be not of a very exalted character, soon become melancholy and miserable. Happiness, like every other valuable quality, can not be completely possessed, without encountering many dangers, and conquering many difficulties. The prize is great, but the task is arduous. A healthy body, and vigorous mind, are as essentially necessary to the enterprise, as equal courage and fortitude are to its success. The bold adventurer, who, destitute of these resources, quits the bays and harbors of society, shallow, rocky and dangerous as they undoubtedly are, and commits himself to the wild and expansive sea of solitude, will sink into its deep and disastrous bed without a hold to save him from destruction. The instances we have already given, to which many more might easily be added, furnish unequivocal testimony of the truth of this grand precept, *it is not good for man to be alone;* which was given by the great Author of nature, and imprinted in characters sufficiently legible on the human heart:

God never made a solitary man;
'T would jar the concord of his general plan.
Should man through nature solitary roam,
His will his sovereign, everywhere his home,
What force would guard him from the lion's jaw?
What swiftness save him from the panther's paw?
Or should fate lead him to some safer shore,
Where panthers never prowl, nor lions roar,
Where liberal nature all her charms bestows,
Suns shine, birds sing, flowers bloom, and water flows,
Still discontented, though such glories shone,
He'd sigh and murmur to be there alone.

Content can not be procured, except by social intercourse, or a judicious communion with those whom congenial tastes, and similiar talents and dispositions, point out for our companions. The civilization of man, from whence the species derive such happy consequences, results entirely from a proper management of the *social principles;* even the source of his support, the melioration of the otherwise rude and unprofitable

earth, can only be obtained by social combination. How erroneous a notion, therefore, must the mind of those men have formed of "their being's end and aim," and how strong must their antipathies to the species be, who, like a certain celebrated French hermit, would chose a station among the craters of Vesuvius, as a place which afforded them greater security, than the society of mankind? The idea of being able to produce our own happiness from the stores of amusement and delight which we ourselves may possess, independently of all communication with or assistance from others, is certainly extremely flattering to the natural pride of man; but, even if this were possible, and that a solitary enthusiast could work up his feelings to a higher and more lasting degree of felicity, than an active inhabitant of the world, amid all its seducing vices and enchanting follies, is capable of enjoying, it would not follow that society is not the province of all those whom peculiar circumstances have not unfitted for its duties and enjoyments. It is, indeed, a false and deceitful notion, that a purer stream of happiness is to be found in the delightful bowers of solitude than in the busy walks of men. Neither of these stations enjoy exclusively this envied stream; for it flows along the vale of peace, which lies between the two extremes; and those who follow it with a steady pace, without deviating too widely from its brink on either side, will reach its source, and taste it at its spring. But devious, to a certain degree, must be the walk; for the enjoyments of life are best attained by being varied with judgment and discretion. The finest joys grow nauseous to the taste, when the cup of pleasure is drained to the dregs. The highest delight loses its attraction by too frequent recurrence. It is only by a proper mixture and combination of the pleasures of society with those of solitude, of the gay and lively recreation of the world with the serene and tranquil satisfactions of retirement, that we can enjoy each in its highest relish. Life is intolerable without society; and society loses half its charms by being too eagerly

and constantly pursued. Society, indeed, by bringing men of congenial minds and similar dispositions together, uniting them by a community of pursuits, and a reciprocal sympathy of interests, may greatly assist the cause of truth and virtue, by advancing the means of human knowledge and multiplying the ties of human affections; and so far as the festive board, the lively dance, the brilliant coterie, and other elegant and fashionable pastimes, contribute to these ends, they are truly valuable, and deserve, not only encouragement, but approbation. On this principle, the various clubs which are formed by artisans, and other inferior orders in society, ought to be respected. The mind, in order to preserve its useful activity and proper tone, must be occasionally relaxed, which can not be so beneficially effected as by means of associations founded on the pursuit of common pleasure. A friendly meeting, or a social entertainment, exhilarates the spirits, exercises the faculties of the mind; calls forth the feelings of the heart, and creates, when properly formed and indulged, a reciprocity of kindness, confidence and esteem. It softens the severity of virtue, while it strengthens and enforces its effects. I, therefore, sincerely exhort my disciples not to absent themselves morosely from public places, nor to avoid the social throng; which can not fail to afford to judicious, rational and feeling minds, many subjects both of amusement and instruction. It is true, that we can not relish the pleasures, and taste the advantages of society, without being able to give a patient hearing to the tongue of folly, to excuse error, to bear with infirmity, to view mediocrity of talents without scorn, and illiberality of sentiment without retort; to indulge frivolity of behavior, and even to forgive rudeness of manners; but the performance of these conditions meets with its own reward; for it is scarcely credible, how very much our own tempers and dispositions are meliorated, and our understandings improved, by bearing with the different tempers, and humoring the perverse dispositions of others; we experience by such a

conduct the high delight of pleasing others, and the great advantage of improving ourselves.

Delightful, however, as social pleasures naturally are to the human mind; necessary as they certainly are, under proper regulations, to the preservation of the spirits; and beneficial as they may undoubtedly be rendered, by judicious choice and wise reflection, it is not every person who withdraws himself from the highly-colored scenes of public life, to the shades of privacy and retirement, that deserves the imputation generally cast on such characters, of being inclined to sullenness and misanthropy. There are many who seek the retreats of solitude, for the very purpose of rendering their efforts more useful to society; many who relinquish the endearments of private friendship, and the applauses of public approbation, only the more nobly to deserve them; and many, whose souls are so bitterly tormented by the anguish of misfortune, and the sickness of sorrow, that they find no relief from society, and recede from its scenes to avoid giving disturbance to that gayety which they are incapable of enjoying, and to prevent their factious feelings from molesting any but themselves. There are others who retire from the world to pursue objects the most glorious to the individual, and most useful to mankind; the attainment of which can only be hoped for from the advantages which solitude affords. Glowing with a sublime and generous spirit, they sacrifice the joys of life, the charms of society, and even the advantages of health, to show their attachment to the species; and, immured from the sight of this world, toil, with indefatigable industry, for its benefit, without expecting any other reward than the satisfaction resulting from the sense of having promoted the interest, and advanced the happiness of their fellow-creatures. So also:

Sage reflection, bent with years;
Conscious virtue, void of fears;
Muffled silence, wood-nymph shy;
Meditation's piercing eye;

Halcyon peace on moss reclin'd;
Retrospect, that sears the mind;
Rapt, earth-gazing reverie;
Blushing, artless modesty;
Health that snuffs the morning air;
Full-eyed truth, with bosom bare;
Inspiration, nature's child,
Seek the solitary wild.

The state of the mind, if properly consulted, will discover whether solitude may be safely indulged. The bosom that, amidst the gay delights and luxurious pleasures of the world, feels a rising discontent and uneasiness, may try the retreats of solitude without danger; and if, after a certain period, an attachment to its mild and tranquil scenes continues, and the heart enjoys that quietude and content which it before so vainly wished to experience, society may be advantageously relinquished. The patient may, under such circumstances, safely indulge the natural inclination of the mind, and gratify the habitual feelings of his heart; he may then exclaim in the language of the poet:

"Oh! snatch me swift from those tumultuous scenes,
To lonely groves and sweetly verdant greens,
To where religion, peace and comfort dwell,
And cheer with heavenly rays the lonely cell;
To where no ruffling winds, no raging seas,
Disturb the mind amid its pensive ease:
Each passion calm; where mild affections shine,
The soul-enjoying quietude divine:
Unknown in private or in public strife,
Soft sailing down the placid streams of life:
Aw'd by no terrors, by no cares perplex'd;
My life a gentle passage to the next."

But when that delightful tranquillity of mind, which an excess of social pleasure has impaired or destroyed, is not restored to its original purity by the uninterrupted quietude of seclusion, it may fairly be concluded, that there is some natural and constitutional defect, that defeats the remedy, and

prevents the soul from tasting that serenity which is so essential to the enjoyment of human happiness. Under such circumstances it is dangerous to indulge the pleasures of solitude; the sufferer should fly back to society; cultivate the duties of active life, and solicit, with temperate indulgence, its more agreeable enjoyments. For, although the pleasures and occupations of the world can not eradicate this species of intellectual disease, they may, by being judiciously followed, suspend its progress, and alleviate its pangs. That case must always be desperate, when the antidote is too weak to reach the poison, or to counteract its operation. A pious resignation to his fate, can alone afford relief:

"Oh! as it pleases thee, thou Power Supreme,
To drive my bark thro' life's more rapid stream,
If lowering storms my destined course attend,
And ocean rage till this black voyage shall end,
Let ocean rage, and storms indignant roar,
I bow submissive and resign'd adore:
Resigned adore, in various changes tried;
Thy own lov'd Son my anchor and my guide:
Resigned adore, whate'er thy will decree;
My faith in Jesus, and my hope in Thee;
And humbly wait till, through a sea of woes,
I reach the wished-for harbor of repose."

There are, however, circumstances under which it is absolutely necessary to retire from the world, in order to avoid the recurrence of sentiments and feelings that are pregnant with unhappiness. To a mind that feels an unconquerable disgust of the manners and maxims of a world which it can not reform; to a heart that turns with horror from the various sights the world exhibits of human woe, which he is incapable of relieving; to a bosom that is stung by the various vices which he can not prevent or restrain, and which are hourly practiced among the sons of men, retirement becomes an obligation which the justice that every good man owes to his own felicity demands. The impulse of solitude may in such case be conscientiously indulged, in the firmest confidence of its

rectitude. It is a retreat necessary to the preservation, not only of happiness, but of virtue; and the world itself may be benefitted by its effects. Removed from the sad scenes of inactivity, wretchedness and guilt, the tender feelings of pity are regulated with composure; the mind views its own operations with nicer discrimination; the high sense of virtue is rendered less indignant; and the hatred against vice more temperate and discerning. The violent emotions which created the disgusting pain gently subside; and as our reflections on the condition of human nature prevail, the soul feels how incumbent it is to endeavor to bear with the follies, to alleviate the miseries, and to reform the vices of mankind; while the leisure and quietude which solitude affords, enables a man, who has thus retired, to point out the most likely means of accomplishing the ends which his lonely meditation and philanthropic feelings have generally inspired:

"With aspect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him seated on a mount serene,
Above the fogs of sense, and passion's storm.
All the black cares and tumults of this life,
Like harmless thunder breaking at his feet,
Excite his pity, nor impair his peace.
Earth's genuine sons, the sceptred and the slave,
A mingled mob! a wandering herd! he sees,
Bewilder'd in the vale; in all unlike,
His full reverse in all! What higher praise?
What stronger demonstration of the right?
Himself too much he prizes to be proud,
And nothing thinks so great in man as man.
Too dear he holds man's interest to neglect
Another's welfare, or his right invade.
Wrong he sustains with temper, looks on heav'n,
Nor stoops to think his injurer his foe;
But looks with gentle pity round, to find
How he can best relieve another's woe,
Or hush the vicious passions into peace."

Those who have passed their lives in the domestic privacies of retirement; who have only been used to the soft and gentle

offices of friendship, and to the tender endearments of love; who have formed their notion of virtue from those bright images which the purity of religion, the perfection of moral sentiments, and the feelings of an affectionate heart, have planted in their minds, are too apt to yield to the abhorrence and disgust they must unavoidably feel on the first view of the artificial manners and unblushing vices of the world. Issuing from the calm retreats of simplicity and innocence, and fondly hoping to meet with more enlarged perfection in the world, their amiable, just and benevolent dispositions are shocked at the sour severities, the sordid selfishness, the gross injustice, the base artifices and the inhuman cruelties, which deform the fairest features of social life, and disgrace the best framed fabric of human polity. Revolting, however, as this disappointment must certainly be, and grievously as the feelings of such characters must be wounded on their entering the world, it is a cowardly desertion of their duty to shrink from the task, and withdraw their services from their fellow-creatures. Constituted as society is, human happiness, and the improvement of the species, materially depend upon the active concurrence of every individual in the general scheme of nature; and the man who withholds his assistance to promote the public good, loosens or destroys a link in that chain of things, by which the whole is intended to be kept together and preserved. The doctrine, therefore, can not be too forcibly inculcated, that it is indispensably incumbent on every individual so to accommodate himself to the manners of his cotemporaries, and the temper of the times, that he may have an opportunity of promoting the happiness of others, while he increases his own; of extending the scale of human knowledge by his social industry; of relieving distress by his bounty; and of exhibiting the deformities of vice, and the beauties of virtue, both by his precepts and example. And this sacred obligation, by which every good man feels himself so firmly bound to promote the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures, of course enjoins

him to shun, with equal perseverance, the giddy multitude in their pursuits of lawless pleasure, and to avoid the thoughtless votaries, and baneful orgies of wit, intemperance and sensual debauchery. This is best effected by every individual forming a rational scheme of domestic enjoyment, and engaging in some useful occupation, in which neither the frivolous pursuits of the vainly busy, the ostentatious parade of the richly proud, the faithless pleasures of the unthinking gay, the insatiable anxieties of avarice, nor the distracting compunctions of vice, shall form any part; but in which, with a few amiable and faithful friends, he shall pass the intervals of virtuous industry, or charitable exertion, in the bosom of a fond and cheerful family, whose mutual endearments and affections will confer on each other the highest happiness human nature is capable of enjoying:

Active in indolence, abroad who roam
In quest of happiness, which dwells at home,
With vain pursuits fatigu'd, at length will find
Its real dwelling is a virtuous mind.

Retirement, however, when it is not inconsistent with our duties to society, or injurious to those family interests which it is one of our principal foundations of happiness to promote, is capable of producing the most beneficial effects on our minds. The self-communion which must accompany a wise and rational solitude, not only fosters and confirms our virtuous inclinations, but detects and expels those latent vices which have secretly crept into and corrupted the heart. It induces a habit of contemplation, which invigorates the faculties of the soul; raises them to the highest energies, and directs them to purposes more elevated and noble than it was possible for them, amidst the business and pleasures of public life, to attain. It tends, indeed, to unfold the powers of the mind to so great an extent, that we are ashamed of having thought that our talents were confined within the limits we had prescribed, and blush at the ignorance and cowardice by which we were deceived. The activity of genius is unlimited,

and the measure of its effects depends entirely upon a steady exertion of its powers. A courageous and persevering industry is capable of surmounting every difficulty, and of performing the highest achievements. A sense of intellectual weakness so far from being indulged, ought to be combated with fortitude and resolution, until it is completely destroyed. The human mind, like a noble tree, extends its branches widely round, and raises them to the skies, in proportion as the soil on which it grows is more or less cultivated and manured; but not being fixed to any certain spot, its growth may be improved to any size, by transplanting it to the soil in which it most delights to dwell. By that firm reliance on its natural strength, that indefatigable exertion of its improved powers, that steady observance of its successful operations, that warm and active zeal for excellence to which it is invited by the advantages, and encouraged by the opportunities, which seclusion affords, it will ascend from one stage of improvement to another, from acquisition to acquisition; and, by a gradual and steady progress, reach a comprehensive elevation, as great and surprising as it was once thought visionary and unattainable. To these sublime and noble effects of human intellect, solitude is the sincerest guide and most powerful auxiliary; and he who aspires to mental and moral excellence, whose soul is anxious to become both great and good, will, of course, seek its inspiring shades.

Solitude, indeed, under any circumstances, can only become injurious by being carried to excess, or by being misapplied; and what is there that will not, by being abused or misapplied, be rendered equally injurious? The highest advantages society is capable of conferring, the loftiest flights of fancy, the best affections of the heart, the greatest strength of body, the happiest activity of the mind, the elements of fire and water, the blessings of liberty, and, in short, all the excellent gifts of Providence, as well as the ingenious contrivance of man, may, by these means, be perverted, their uses destroyed, their

ends and objects defeated, and their operations and effects rendered extensively mischievous and detrimental.

The general disadvantages which solitude is certainly capable of producing, can not be lessened by conceding to its adversaries, that it is, when sought under unfavorable circumstances, inauspicious to human happiness. It would be overstepping the sacred boundaries of truth, and violating the rights of candor, not to admit that irrational solitude frequently overclouds the reason, contracts the understanding, vitiates the manners, inflames the passions, corrupts the imagination, sours the temper, and debases the whole character of its votaries. Nor is it necessary to deny, that many of them, instead of employing the delightful leisure which retirement affords, to hush the jarring passions, to chastise the fancy, to elevate and adorn the mind and to reform and meliorate the heart, have been too often occupied in the most frivolous pursuits, and the indulgence of the most sordid and criminal desires.

But these instances in which the pure and peaceful retreats of solitude have been tainted and disturbed by the vicious and turbulent desires of the world, only demonstrate the infirm, corrupt and imperfect nature of the species, and not in the smallest degree depreciate the value of those high advantages which result from occasional and well-regulated solitude.

It is said by a celebrated German writer, in a poetical personification of solitude, that she holds in one hand a cup of bliss, in which she presents unceasing sweets to the lips of the happy; and in the other grasps an envenomed dagger, which she plants with increasing torture in the bosom of the wretched; but this must be considered as the language of the muse, and mere flight of poetic fancy; except, indeed, so far as it tends to enforce the idea, that virtue will always be happy, and vice forever miserable; for retirement, while it pours the balm of comfort into the aching bosom of the unfortunate, and offers a cordial, cheering as nectar, to the drooping spirits of the

wise and virtuous, only operates as a corrosive, agonising poison, on the constitutions of the weak and vicious.

It is a gross mistake, to suppose that the pleasures of social life are incompatible with the benefits to be derived from solitude. They may not only be intermingled with, but made mutually to aid and augment each other. Solitude may surely be enjoyed, without undergoing an exile from the world; and society may be freely mixed with, without absolutely renouncing the pleasures of retirement. The circumstances of life, indeed, call loudly on every mind to interchange the pursuits of activity and scenes of quietude and repose. The alliance of solitude and society is necessary to the perfection not only of the intellectual character, but the corporeal constitution of man. To conclude that the duties of life must necessarily be neglected by devoting a portion of our time to solitude, is much more erroneous than to conclude that those duties are not always fulfilled amidst the pleasures or business of society.

Daily observation proves most clearly, that many of the charms, and some of the benefits, of rural retreat, may be enjoyed without retiring to any very considerable distance from the metropolis, the seat of social joys and interested activity. Petrarch, during his residence in the city of Parma, though extremely flattered by the friendship shown him, was glad to steal from public life as often as he could, and to indulge the high delight he naturally felt in wandering through the fields and woods which surrounded the metropolis. One day, led by his love of exercise, he passed the river at Lenza, which is three miles from Parma, and found himself in the territory of Rhegio, in a forest which is called Sylva Plana, or Low Wood; though it is situated upon a hill, from whence are discovered the Alps, and all Cisalpine Gaul. Aged oaks, whose heads seemed to touch the clouds, sheltered the avenues of the forest from the rays of the sun; while the fresh breezes which descended from the neighboring mountains, and the little rivulets which crawled along its skirts, tempered the meridian heats

of the day, and preserved to the earth, even in the greatest droughts, a soft verdure, enameled with the finest flowers. Birds of every description warbled forth their rural songs from the thick coverts, while deer, and every animal of the chase, sported through the purlieus. In the middle of this beautiful forest nature had formed a romantic theater, which, from its enchanting decorations, she seemed to have designed for the residence of the muses. The charms of this delightful retreat struck the mind of Petrarch with a sort of inspiration, and revived so strongly his original taste for solitude, that on his return to Parma, he endeavored to procure some spot near the environs of the city, to which he might occasionally retire from the fatigues of his archdeaconry, and indulge his mind in the blessings of innocence and the delights of rural repose. The industry of his inquiries soon furnished him with a small cottage, exactly suited to his wishes, situated at the end of the city, near the abbey of St. Anthony. To this place he fondly and frequently retired, whenever he could escape from the duties of his church, and the invitations of his friends. The superiority of his talents had, at this time, attracted the attention and applause of mankind; and his engaging manners secured to him the respect and esteem of the nobles of Parma, who besieged him with the most friendly and flattering importunities to partake of their daily parties of pleasure. Petrarch, however, had formed notions of happiness very foreign to those which result from the society of luxurious lords or fashionable females, to whom, in general, poetry afforded no delight, nor philosophy instruction; and the companions to whom he could afford neither amusement nor information, were not likely to afford him much satisfaction. The quiet and simple pleasures of retirement were more delightful to his mind than all the elegances and splendors of Parma; but this partiality to retirement did not induce him to renounce the rational society which a few select friends, with whom he had closely connected himself, was occasionally capable of affording him. "So

conveniently," says he, "is this delightful cottage situated, that I enjoy all the advantages of rural retirement, and yet retain within my reach all the pleasures with which this gay and elegant city abounds. The society of a few select friends recreates my mind whenever it is distracted by the anxieties of study, or stagnated by the stillness of solitude; and when I am satiated with the pleasures of the town, I fly with rapture to the sweet repose, and to all the interesting and endearing occupations of this charming retreat. O! may the kindness of fortune long indulge me in the enjoyment of this neutral state; this happy alternation of rural tranquillity and convivial solace! a state of felicity to which neither the anchorites of Egypt nor the philosophers of Greece, ever attained. In this humble abode let me quietly pass the remainder of my days unseduced by the charms of greatness, and uninterrupted by the pleasures of the world. Fly, all ye vain delusions and fantastic dreams, from this cottage of content, and seek your native territories, the palaces of princes, and the altars of ambition!" The voice of wisdom and virtue calls aloud on every man to adopt the scheme of happiness which Petrarch so successfully practiced. By thus dividing our time between the busy cares and innocent amusements of public life, and the studious and tranquil pleasures of retirement, between the gay pursuits of personal gratifications, and the more noble and elevated exercises of intellect, we may avoid the dangers of contracting, on the one hand, a passion for light and frivolous dissipation; and, on the other, a joyless disposition to misanthropic severity; and may shun the most, if not all the evil consequences which either solitude or society is capable of producing, which, when indulged irrationally or indiscreetly, in general prove the Scylla or Charybdis of our lives.

These are the observations which it has occurred to me to make upon the advantages or disadvantages with which those important means of human happiness are respectively pregnant. I can truly say, that I have felt, whenever the cares

of life and duties of my profession have allowed me leisure to retire, the most sublime and satisfactory enjoyment from solitude; and I sincerely wish that every one who is disposed to taste it, may receive the same comfort and pleasure from its charms. But I exhort them, while they enjoy the sacred blessings of repose, not to neglect the social virtues, the consolations of friendship, or the endearments of love; but so manage the wants of nature, and arrange the business and concerns of life, as to find an adequate portion of leisure for the noble duties of retirement, as well as for company and conversation of the world. May they, in short, enjoy the admiration and esteem of their friends, and a complacent approbation of their own conduct, without losing that relish for the pleasures of rational retirement, by which alone these high advantages are most likely to be gained.

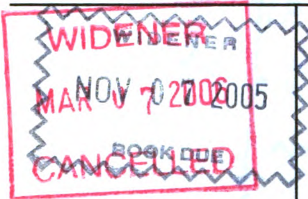
To love all mankind, and to promote, to the utmost of our power, the happiness of all those with whom we are more intimately connected, is the highest injunction both of morality and religion. But this important duty certainly does not require that we should surrender ourselves with servile obedience, or abject submission, to any one, however superior he may be, either in talents, in station, or in merit. On the contrary, it is the duty of every one, not only to cultivate the inclination, but to reserve the power of retiring occasionally from the world, without indulging a disposition to renounce its society or contemn its manners. While we assert, with manly resolution, the independent spirit of human nature, our happiness may be considerably augmented, by extracting from the multitudinous affairs of the world, and the various enjoyments and wise instructions it is capable of affording. Society is the school of wisdom, and solitude the temple of virtue. In the one we learn the art of living with comfort among our fellow-creatures, and in the other, of living with quietude by ourselves. A total retreat from the world would place us aside from that part which Providence chiefly intended us to

act; but without occasional retreat, it is certain that we must act that part very ill. There will be neither consistency in the conduct, nor dignity in the character, of one who sets apart no share of his time for meditation and reflection. "In the heat and bustle of life," says an eloquent preacher, "while passion is every moment throwing false colors on the objects around us, nothing can be viewed in a just light. If you wish that reason should exert her native power, you must step aside from the crowd, into the cold and silent shade. It is thus that with sober and steady eye she examines what is good or ill, what is wise or foolish, in human conduct; she looks back on the past; she looks forward to a future; and forms plans, not for the present moment only, but for the whole life. How should that man discharge any part of his duty aright, who never suffers his passions to cool? And how should his passions cool, who is engaged, without interruption, in the tumults of the world? This incessant stir may be called *the perpetual drunkenness of life.* It raises that eager fermentation of the spirit, which will be ever sending forth the dangerous fumes of rashness and folly. Whereas he who mingles rational retreat with worldly affairs, remains calm, and master of himself. He is not whirled round, and rendered giddy by the agitation of the world; but from that sacred retirement, in which he has been conversant among higher objects, comes forth into the world with manly tranquillity, fortified by principles which he has formed, and prepared for whatever may befall."

Sweet solitude! when life's gay hours are past,
Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at last.
Toss'd through tempestuous seas, the voyage o'er,
Pale we look back, and bless the friendly shore.
Our own strict judges, our past life we scan,
And ask if glory hath enlarged the span:
If bright the prospect, we the grave defy,
Trust future ages, and contented die.

THE END.





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